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No. 29

ONE OF THE BOYS OF NEW YORK;
OR,
The Adventures of Tommy Bounce.

By PETER PAD.

CHAPTER I.

In bidding good-bye to the schoolboy days of Tommy Bounce, as he has appeared from week to week under

day," said his youngest daughter, Clara, a bright, beautiful, wide-awake girl, about fourteen years of age.

"Well, all right, pet. Take good care of him, and yourself, too," said the old man, kissing her, and going away to business.

Tommy blushed and glanced at his pretty cousin, and thought it wouldn't be so very bad to have such a sparkling little blonde to take care of him even if he was a trifle greener than she was.

She was indeed a splendid and entertaining companion, and she kept Tommy out all day long, showing

New York by the contrast of his clothes and the cut of his hair, and by his general appearance. And he was not long in discovering this himself.

Arriving at Union Square, he stopped to look at the Washington Monument.

He had never seen anything like it before, and without knowing what it was, he gazed at it long and earnestly.

Presently a couple of bootblacks approached him. They were a pair of the regular b'hoys and ever ready for a bit of fun. They saw at a glance that Tommy was



Tommy and Dovey gave each two or three sharp wells in such rapid succession that their first impressions were that they had been struck by lightning.

the heading of "Pluck," we left him in New York city, at the house of his uncle, Ebenezer, with the privilege of going about for a week, that he might be acquainted with the great city somewhat, before settling down in the old gentleman's store to learn the hardware business.

"Keep your north eye open, Tommy," said his uncle, on the morning following his arrival. "You are a little green, my boy, and you must look out and not get taken in. There are all kinds of contrivances in New York for taking in the unsophisticated."

"All right, uncle. I'll try and not get taken in," replied Tommy, smiling.

"I am going to show him through Central Park to-

him all the points of interest, and posting him regarding the social ways of the city.

He liked the little fairy from the first, and by night he was ready to swear that she was the most splendid creature in the world, while Clara concluded that he was the handsomest and smartest country boy that she had ever seen.

The next day he went out alone and walked down Broadway to see the sights. It was the opening of a new world to him. So much rattle-te-bang; so many bright and beautiful things, nearly turned his head.

However smart he might have looked in his native village, or among his schoolmates, he was marked in

green and so they went for him just as a cat would run for a mouse.

"Hello, country; have a shine?" asked one of them.

"No, I don't want to buy anything," replied Tommy, moving away a few paces.

"Sell yer one cheap."

Tommy shook his head and pretended not to notice him.

"Nice hoss, eh?" said the other, referring to the equestrian statue of Washington.

"Yes. What is it?"

"What? Don't you know what that is?"

"No. I never saw it before," replied Tommy.

"Why, that's the statue of St. Patrick, mounted on a moss, drivin' the frogs an' snakes out o' Ireland." Tommy looked at the fellow a moment.

"Don't yer b'lieve it?"

"No, I do not," he replied firmly.

"Yer don't? Go in' fer to tell me I lie, say?" said the fellow, thrusting his face saucily into Tommy's.

"Yes, I do tell you you lie. And what are you going to do about it?" he asked; with clenched fists.

"I'd kick der stuffins' out o' yer, dat's what I'll do 'bout it, country."

"Well, you may as well begin, for I want to get along and see the sights," he replied, tauntingly.

"Here, Patsy, hold my box. I'll show him some sights what he never seen afore," said the young rough, passing his workshop over to his friend.

He squared off and went for Tommy with the evident intention of knocking him out of time in three shakes of a goat's tail; but in an instant he saw that Tommy was no slouch, and had evidently used his bunches of fives often before; and in the next instant he went sprawling over on the pavement, heels up and head down.

Quick as thought the other threw down his boxes and went for Tommy; but he also woke up the same wrong passenger, and before he could get at him, he found his nose fooling with Tommy's fist, and he went kiting over on top of his friend.

Both boys got up, but finding Tommy still standing on ground, they hesitated about going in for any more.

"Got all you want?" he asked.

"Cheese it, Patsy!" said the one who had been knocked down first.

They both cut and run over towards the square, yelling back at our hero, but evidently not caring for anything nearer.

"What's the matter here, young fellow?" asked a policeman who approached from the opposite side of the square.

"Nothing, only those fellows attempted to thrash me, and I patted 'em; that's all," replied Tommy, calmly.

"Oh! oh! that's it, hey? What were they going to thrash you for?"

"Well, I asked them what monument that was, and they said St. Patrick's; and because I didn't believe it, they were going to cram the humbug down my throat, I suppose."

"Well, look out for yourself."

"You bet I will, if they try to fool with me."

"From the country, aren't you?"

Confound it, thought Tommy, everybody thinks I am from the country.

"Yes, sir, I am."

"Well, that's what made them tackle you; keep your eye open," said the officer smiling and turning away.

"Thank you, sir; but will you be good enough to tell me what monument that is?"

"Oh, yes, that's Washington."

"Thank you," he replied, and moved farther away to view it from another direction.

While still standing there, a woman came up to him, holding what looked to be a baby in her arms, although it was so wrapped in an old shawl that it could not be seen.

"Please, sir, will you be good enough to give me the price of a breakfast? I haven't eaten anything since yesterday morning, and my poor babe is almost starved," said she, in pathetic appeal, the first one that he had ever heard.

"What is the matter that you have had no food?"

"Oh, sir my husband is dead; I have a large family, and being out of work, I am obliged to beg or starve."

This touched Tommy's heart in an instant, and taking fifty cents from his pocket, he gave it to her.

"Oh, thank you, young man; you have saved me from starving," said she.

"I am glad if I have."

Thanking him still more profusely she turned and walked toward Third Avenue.

Tommy's heart was tender, and the thought of this woman starving in the midst of so much elegance and wealth touched him keenly.

"I wish I had given her more," said he gazing after her. "I have a few dollars that I do not want—I will follow and give her more," and suiting the action to the words, he started to follow her.

But the woman had some reds the start of him, and was walking fast, so before he could overtake her she had reached Third Avenue, and entered a liquor shop.

Tommy stopped and looked at the place to see if it was an eating house or any thing of the kind. But it looked like almost anything else. In fact he soon convinced himself that it was a gin mill, and then to gratify his curiosity as to what the starving woman was doing in such a place, he opened the door and entered.

Calling for a glass of lager he glanced around the dark, dirty place.

Behind a screen he heard voices, and glancing at a bundle that lay on the head of a barrel he saw it was the same that the starving woman had carried in her arms.

Stepping up to it carelessly he pulled the old shawl aside and there beheld the face of a large, dirty china doll, with a baby cap on—a very fraud.

Just then he heard the woman speaking to some one behind the screen.

"Yes, I met a young chap from the country, and he squirmed at my old yarn! so here she goes. Fill 'em up again, Barney," she cried.

"The old fraud!" said Tommy to himself.

When Barney, the bartender, went to serve his "starving" customer with some mere gin, Tommy took up an empty bottle and knocked the nose off of the china baby, after which he turned and left the place, concluding that he had learned one lesson at least by the adventure.

Returning to Broadway he continued his way down "taking in" everything to be seen on either side. The

chimes on Grace Church were ringing, and of course his attention was drawn to them, as also Stewart's mammoth dry goods store, and while he stood gazing at it a young, flashily-dressed fellow approached him.

"I say, my friend, don't you want to buy a watch?" he asked.

"I think not," replied Tommy.

"Well, now, I'll tell you," said the fellow, taking Tommy by the arm and leading him gently down Tenth Street a few steps. "The fact is I am a stranger here in New York, and having lost my money, I want to get some. The only thing I have got to sell is this watch," said he, taking a large yellow watch from his pocket.

Tommy looked covetously at it.

"The watch is actually worth fifty dollars, but in order to get home, I will let you have it for ten dollars."

Tommy turned it over in his hand, but shook his head.

"You can make twenty-five dollars by selling it to some of your friends."

"I haven't got ten dollars to spare."

"Well, how much have you got?"

"I haven't more than five dollars that I want to spare," replied Tommy.

"Is that so? The fact is, it will cost me five dollars to get home," he mused. "But, I say, I'll tell you what I'll do. Let me have the five dollars on it, and if I don't send for it in a week, the watch is yours. Come, that's fair."

"Well, here it is."

"Thanks. Now give me your address."

Tommy did as requested, and they soon after parted. Tommy chuckled to himself over the bargain he had made, and every now and then he would take it out of his pocket and look at it gleefully. He saw that it was fashionable to wear watches, and he concluded that this was just what he wanted, to be up with the times.

From here he kept on down town, all eyes for what was to be seen, and occasionally getting yelled at by some of the boys who passed him on the street.

"Confound it!" he muttered, "everybody seems to know I am from the country. Wonder what it is? It must be my long hair. I don't see any other young fellow wearing it so long, so I'll just drop into the first barber shop I meet and have it cut."

This he proceeded to do; and after he had been through the tonsorial mill he was quite a different looking fellow, although not exactly a ripe-looking one. However, it was a great improvement, and saved him from much annoyance.

Arriving at the City Hall, he was beset by a dozen boot-blacks, all eager to give him a shine. By this time he had learned the value of polished boots, and so he allowed one of them to go over his pedal extremities.

Then he continued his journey down towards the Battery, stopping at Trinity Church to inspect it and the historical graves within its yard, many of which he had learned of in studying history.

In fact, his journey all the way down had been pleasant and instructive.

Arriving at the Battery he seated himself on one of the seats with which the beautiful park is supplied, and there took in the whole scene.

A policeman gave him what information he sought, and there he sat watching the curious building known as Castle Garden, where all the emigrants land, Governor's Island beyond, with Fort Columbus and Castle William; Staten and Bedloe's Islands down the bay.

The water was covered with all kinds of craft from the rowboat to the laviathan's steamers that cross and recross the ocean and penetrate every clime, and as this was all new to him he enjoyed it silently for a long time: it is, in fact, one of the most beautiful sights to be met with anywhere, and our hero "took it all in."

"Please give me a penny, for I haven't got any pa," said a pitiful voice at his side.

He turned and saw a poorly-clad but rather good-looking child standing before him. But remembering his experience with the starving woman he shook his head.

"Eh, you go soak your head!" said the girl, starting away. "Stingy thing, I'd put a head on you for a cent. Take a walk around the park, you snoozer!" was her parting advice.

Beggars were not impressing him very favorably, but he had to laugh in spite of himself.

Then a little shaver approached him.

"Want some circus?" he asked.

"What is that you say, sonny?"

"Want some circus?"

"I don't understand you."

"Well, I'll show yer," said the little fellow, peeling off his jacket and throwing his old hat on top of it on the grass.

Thus stripped the little fellow began to go through a series of gymnastic evolutions, turning and twisting into all sorts of shapes, and doing some really wonderful feats there on the graveled walk.

Tommy was interested, and when the little acrobat had finished, he gave him a ten cent scrip.

"Gimme fivepence more an' I'll walk on my ear," said he.

"Well, go ahead."

The little fellow, good as his word, poised himself on his hands, with his heels in the air, and bringing his head down close to the ground, he walked along, on his hands, and as far as it was possible to do so, he walked on his ear. Tommy laughed heartily, and handing out the nickle, the little circus performer leaped from his hands to his feet without touching the ground, caught up his hat and coat and walked away with a swagger.

After seeing everything around here, he visited several of the wharves in the vicinity after which he took a stage up Broadway, again reached home in time for dinner.

The family were all assembled and much anxiety was felt to learn the result of Tommy's explorations during the day.

"Tell us all about it, Tommy," said his Uncle Ebenezer, cheerfully.

"How happened you to get your hair cut?" asked his aunt.

"Well, I thought I had most too much Andover with me for luck," replied Tommy.

But at his uncle's request he told over his adventures, and after finishing all but about buying the watch, he pulled it out and told how he came to get it.

The moment his uncle saw it he commenced to laugh heartily, and one by one the others joined him, while Tommy sat there with the watch in his hand, blushing and wondering what the dickens they all meant.

"Why, Tommy, you have been taken in," said his uncle.

"What do you mean?"

"Let's see the ticker?"

Taking it in his hand he looked at it a moment.

"Why, it has stopped."

"Has it?" asked Tommy in surprise, for he had not noticed it. "Perhaps it wants winding up," he suggested.

"Winding! Why, Tommy you have been taken in badly, for at least five dollars worth, for this is only an old brass arrangement, not worth fifty cents."

"Is that so?" asked Tommy, blushing still deeper.

"That is so. Didn't I tell you to keep your eye open? Why, the city is full of these swindlers, and they are continually on the lookout for people whom they can come it over."

Tommy choked with rage, and his pretty cousins were laughing at his expense, while his uncle and aunt wore a look of pity that was even more tantalizing.

"Well, I own up, and you may have your laugh. But if I ever get caught again, then you may call me a dunce."

"Of course," put in Clara, coming to his rescue, "he never knew anything about such dreadful people as we have here in New York, and how could he be on his guard against them?"

"True, pet, and this will be a good lesson for him; keep right on, Tommy, my boy, and get all the experience you can, for it is one of the best things in the world for you!"

The evening was passed pleasantly and yet Tommy was dreadfully nettled to think he should be so green and that his friends should discover it. He almost wished for somebody to club him for his stupidity.

The next day he went out again, but his eye teeth were pretty well cut and he had but little difficulty, and at the same time he made himself acquainted with other parts of the city.

In the evening he visited one of the theaters with his uncle, and for the first time in his life beheld a stage representation. This was another new world opened before him, and ere his week was up he had seen more than he had ever seen or dreamed of before in his life.

At the end of the week he was taken to the store and introduced to the clerks, and made acquainted with the new life that was to be opened for him. It was all news, but he liked it, and he also liked the fellows who were in his uncle's employ.

One of them he was especially taken with. His name was Frank Hoyt, the assistant book-keeper in the establishment. Frank was one of those mild, innocent young men, who are all attention to business during business hours, but who let themselves loose afterwards, and appear quite different personages.

He was, in fact, a good book-keeper—a smart, reliable fellow in the business, but when out, one of the gayest, fastest, and liveliest fellows to be found in New York.

When introduced to Tommy as the nephew of his employer, he took him in with his innocent-looking eyes, and Tommy's idea was that he would have liked him very well had he not appeared so serious.

The other clerks appeared so so. Some of them were young, some old; but, of course, they paid great attention to Tommy because of his relationship to their boss.

The first week went well enough, and he was gradually becoming familiar with the business he was to learn. He saw but little of his uncle except mornings and evenings when at home, for at first he was not allowed the freedom of the counting-room.

One day when Mr. Bounce was away Frank Hoyt called Tommy to the counting-room.

"I want you to deliver a letter," said he.

"All right," replied Tommy.

"It is rather a delicate piece of business, and requires a faithful person; and because of your relationship with Mr. Bounce I take you for the business. Take this letter to the person to whom it is directed, and follow the instructions you may receive."

Tommy started away with a light heart, and, after walking a mile or two, delivered the letter to the book-keeper of another hardware house. He read it, and then wrote another, which was directed to still another person some distance away.

After considerable trouble he found this party and handed him the letter. This man wrote still another letter and directed it to a man away across town, which Tommy delivered. Then he in turn wrote one and sent him agoing, and in this way he was kept trotting nearly all day, for what he could not tell, as every person to whom he delivered a letter looked serious and business-like.

Finally he received one directed to Patrick Bannon, on Ann street and he delivered it.

Mr. Bannon was a wild Irishman, and the contents of the letter made him wilder still.

It read as follows:

FRIEND PAT.—The bearer of this letter has been abusing you like a beggar. He says you are a thief and he can prove it, and so I have sent him to you with this letter, the contents of which he knows nothing. Yours truly,

TOM H.

Tommy saw the cloud gathering on the Irishman's

face, and so was not wholly unprepared for what came soon after in the shape of a bounce.

"Ye devil spalpeen! Is it ye that has been callin' me a thafe?" he cried, bounding at our hero like a bulldog. "Git out of this or I'll spile that mug of your'n!" saying which he gave Tommy a whack that made him see stars.

He was about to follow this up with others, but Tommy being nimble got out of the way in quick time, and utterly confounded returned to the store. But Hoyt had taken his leave and so he could get no clew to the outrage that had been imposed upon him.

On his way home that night he came to the conclusion that he had been made the victim of a practical joke, so many of which he had played upon others.

"Sold and got the money," he mused, as he rode along in the cars. "Taken in and done for. Well, his is his fun, his laugh, I'll say nothing about it and see whose turn it is to laugh next. Perhaps these fellows take me for green, but I if mistake not I can play a pretty healthy hand at this game myself. So I'll lay low and wait. But who would have thought that such an honest-looking cuss could be guilty of such a sell. Well, well, all right, we shall know each other better by-and-by," he added, as he reached his uncle's house.

CHAPTER II.

In our last we saw Tommy Bounce make his first appearance in New York, saw him getting acquainted with the city, and several times a victim to sharpers.

But it is a long lane that has no turn, more especially when a smart fellow like Tommy is walking in it.

He was now clerk in his uncle's hardware store, and the reader will doubtless remember the practical joke that Frank Hoyt, the bookkeeper, played on him.

The next day Tommy put on a cheerful appearance, as usual. He said nothing to Hoyt about the unfortunate termination of the errand he sent him on, but went about his business as though nothing had happened.

The mischievous Frank looked as solemn as a gobbler, although he had learned all about the termination of Tommy's errand with the Ann Street Irishman. Both kept their own counsel and looked honest.

About noon, while business was at its best, and the store was full of customers, an old Irish woman entered the store and inquired for Mr. Hoyt.

Tommy showed her into the counting room, where his uncle Ebenezer and several gentlemen were engaged in talking over business.

"A lady wishes to see Mr. Hoyt," he announced loudly, and everybody looked up.

"Frank!" called Mr. Bounce, "this way."

Frank came from the further end of the room, where he was engaged over his books.

"Here is somebody that wishes to see you."

"Mister Hite, I've come to see wud ye pay yer wash bill," said the woman, rather severely.

"My wash bill? I owe you no wash bill," said Frank, blushing deeply.

Tommy was where he could hear, see, and enjoy.

"Fut's that? ye don't owe me seven dollars for doin' yer wash?" she demanded, on a higher key.

"No, nor any other sum."

"Howly mother! d'ye hear that?" she asked, turning to the merchants who sat around.

Old Mr. Bounce's brow lowered. The idea of having a clerk in his employ who did not pay his washing bills was more than he could bear.

"I never saw you before in my life."

"Niver saw me before!"

"You have made a mistake, my good woman."

"Divil a wonst!"

"Yes, you certainly have."

"Narry a mistake. Arn't yer name Frank Hite?"

"Yes, it is."

"An' don't ye board at No. 75 East Broadway?"

"Yes, I do."

"An' yet ye have the gall ter say ye don't know me, an' that ye don't owe me seven dollars for the washin' of yer dirty duds?"

"I certainly have. I have my washing done at a laundry."

"Faiks I know ye do, now that I wudn't trust ye any more till ye paid me my seven dollars."

"Frank, Frank!" said Mr. Bounce, chidingly.

"It's a mistake, sir, I"—

"Divil a mistake at all, at all, sur, an' if you re his boss, it's the loikes of a foine gentleman that ye are ter pay me an' take it out of his wages," said she, going up to the old merchant.

"Frank, I'm astonished," said he.

"I assure you, sir, that the woman has made a mistake in the person," protested the unhappy Frank.

"Yet she appears to know all about you."

"Faiks, an' more than I want ter," put in the indignant woman.

"Is there any other person boarding at your house bearing your name?"

"N—no, sir."

"Well, it looks as though the woman is right, and that you had forgotten the matter."

This was a fearful thrust, and poor Frank blushed into the roots of his hair.

"I never saw the woman before in my life."

"Howly Moses! only hear him. I say, Mr. Hite, maybe ye'll say ye niver seen my daughter Maggie, an' that ye didn't promise ter marry her!"

Frank started back abashed, while every one in the room laughed at his discomfiture.

"Pay me, or I'll spile yer innercent looking face!"

"Good gracious!"

"Pay the woman, Frank, and put an end to this disgraceful scene," said Mr. Bounce, sharply.

"But I"—

"Do as I bid you, sir."

"That's the illigant gentleman that ye are."

"You have the goodness to be quiet, madam, I will see that you get your pay," said the old man.

"Hiven bless ye, sur."

"Frank, you heard what I said."

"Yes, sir, but do you order me to pay a bill that does not belong to me?" said he pleadingly.

"Out, ye smooth-faced spalpeen: ter be afther chatin' a poor widdy out of her honest airnins."

"I think she is right, sir."

Poor Frank was in hot water now, sure enough. He knew he did not owe the seven dollars, but he saw that the others believed to the contrary and that he might lose all favor with his employer if he refused to pay it. So reluctantly he drew forth the money and handed it to her.

"An' no compliments ter ye for it. Begob, ye'd niver have paid it without yer boss had made ye, thanks ter the illigant gentleman," said she.

"Begone, you beat," said Frank.

"Bate, is it? Bate? Be jabbers, I'll bate yer two eyes black and blue inter one, if yer give me any of yer lip, so I will," said she, rushing her big doubled up fist under his nose.

"Begone, woman. You have got your money, now go away," said Mr. Bounce.

"Faiks, I will, for its an illegant gentleman as bids me; but if that spalpeen gives me any of his gab, I'll tache him dacin' manners, so I will."

With this she turned and left the counting-room, greatly to the delight of everybody in it, especially Frank Hoyt, than whom a more crestfallen chap was never seen.

When he saw the old woman about to leave, Tommy walked out to the front of the store and stood by the door as she came along.

"Did you get it?" he asked.

"Faix, I did, much thanks to ye. It'll pay my month's rint an' lave me a bit over for a sup, so it will," said she, passing out.

This little confab between them did not escape Frank Hoyt, who had gone to his desk again. He was enabled to see through the glass counting-room windows, although he had no idea of what passed between them.

Tommy wore a large triumphant grin during the remainder of the day, while Frank looked sour, puzzled and guilty, besides knowing that Mr. Bounce regarded him as little better than a beat. What to make of it he could not for the life of him tell, unless it was purely a mistake on her part, and he regretted now that he had not taken her address. It was not the money he cared for so much as it was the humiliation.

That evening as he was about leaving the store Tommy spoke to him.

"I say, Frank, do you know who that old Irish woman was?"

"No, who is she?" he asked, eagerly.

"She is the wife of Pat Bannon, who keeps the place in Ann Street. Good night," said he turning away toward the lower end of the store.

"Pat Bannon," mused Frank as he went towards the front door. "Who is Pat Bannon?" and he walked up Beekman Street with this conundrum whirling through his head.

"And how the devil should he know her?" was another question he puzzled himself with. "He has only been in the city a few weeks. Pat Bannon," he said to himself again.

Just then he met a friend and stopped to talk with him.

"I say, Frank, did the young country clerk say anything about the errand you sent him on?"

"Not a word," replied Frank, "I guess he took a tumble to it, and concluded to say nothing about it;" and they both laughed.

"Well, he may thank his legs for it, for if Pat Bannon had"—

"What is that you say—who?" asked Frank, catching his friend eagerly by the arm.

"Why, Pat Bannon, that keeps the place there in Ann street; the fellow I gave him a letter to, and who went for him nasty," and again the young man laughed heartily.

But Frank didn't laugh this time. He smelled something that was wonderfully like a rat, and so shaking hands with his friend, he turned and walked away.

"Thunder and blazes!" he muttered, "can it be possible that that country boy, Tommy, was smart enough to put this job up on me? Well, well, if I thought so, I would go and club myself; and yet what other explanation is there for it? He looked a trifle too knowing when he asked me if I knew who the woman was. Confound him! I half suspect he is not so green as he seems to be, or, at least, half so green as I took him to be! At all events, I'll keep an eye on him in the future."

The next morning Tommy was the first clerk in the store, which the porter had just opened when he got there. He frequently took an early breakfast with the servants for the sake of joining in the throng that rushes down to the stores and shops; it was a new and pleasing phase of life to him.

Therefore the porter was not surprised to see him there so early; and, as he had already learned to like the boss's handsome nephew, who was the life of the place, he had his usual chat and morning chaff with him.

His name was Dennis—something—for no one ever called him anything but Dennis, and a jollier Irishman never lived. So it was but natural that he should like our hero, or that Tommy should like him.

"Top o' the mornin' ter ye, Tommy," said he.

"You mean the first end of the day, Dennis," replied Tommy, good naturedly.

"Well, maybe so, my lad; but what brings ye out so early agin this mornin'?"

"Oh, I came down to see the sights."

"Faith! but yer uncle's not up by this time?"

"No, I guess not."

"Be jabbers! If I was in in your place, Tommy, I'd

kick in my bed till the ould man come out, so I wud. Did ye hear the rumpus in the ceuntin'-room the day beyant?"

"Dav what?"

"Ther day beyant—yesterday."

"Oh! you mean the Irish woman and Frank about the wash bill."

"Yes, something of that kind. Wudn't he pay it?"

"He had to. Ask him if he knows Mrs. Bannon, the next time you have a chance."

"Was that her?"

"Yes; ask him about her."

"Faith I will, for he's very fond of his jokes and rigt at me, so he is."

"And ask him about her daughter, Maggie."

"Did he make up ter the girl?"

"The old lady said so."

"Och! but it's fun I'll have wid Mr. Hoyt out o' that, so I will," said Dennis, going back into the far end of the store to open the shutters.

Tommy had set some fun afloat and he was happy. If Frank was not yet sorry for the tricks he played on him, he would take particular pains to make him so.

Going into the counting-room he took some small pellets of shoemaker's wax from a matchbox, and placed them on the top of the stool on which the bookkeeper sat, after which he went out into the store and joined the other clerks who had by this time arrived.

Frank was very late that morning; in fact, he had only got in and taken off his coat when Mr. Bounce arrived.

Feeling somewhat guilty for being late, he threw his books upon the desk, mounted the stool, and pretended to be hard at work. This of course prevented him from inspecting his seat. On the contrary, he stuck to it as close as it was destined to stick to him.

"Here, Frank," called Mr. Bounce, who wanted him for something.

"Yes, sir," he replied, leaping down.

But the high stool clung to him, and before he was fairly aware of it, he had dragged it into the presence of Mr. Bounce.

"Why, Frank, what's the matter?" he asked.

"Gracious! I—I don't know," he stammered, as he whirled around in his wild endeavors to free himself from the stool.

"Look out, confound you! You banged my shin with the cussed thing. What ails it?"

"I don't understand it, sir—I"—

"Why, it is stuck fast to you. Here, let me pull it off."

"How could it happen so?"

"Now, then, pull the other way," said Mr. Bounce, catching hold of the stool by the legs and bracing himself for a pull.

"Gracious, sir!" said Frank, as he pulled away from the seat.

But in pulling away from the seat he also pulled his seat away—that is to say, the seat of his lavender pants.

"Rip!" shouted the old man, as the cloth gave away.

"Thunder!" exclaimed Frank, and at that moment there was a laugh among three or four of the younger clerks, who happened to be near enough to the window to see.

As for Tommy Bounce, he and Dennis were seeing the fun without being seen themselves.

"Oh! oh!"

"Good gracious! What is the meaning of this?" asked Mr. Bounce, glancing from the stool, which he still held in his hand with the seat of Frank's pants attached to it, to his bewildered clerk.

"I'll be hanged if I know, sir."

"Why, it is wax," said the old man, examining it.

"Wax? Where in the world could it have come from?"

"Have you been into a shoemaker's shop lately?"

"Yes, sir, I called in one this morning as I came down, but I did not sit there."

"Well, you probably got it stuck on you in some way," and glancing again at the abashed youth who for prudential reasons kept his back turned away, the old man laughed heartily.

"But what am I to do?" asked Frank, sadly.

"Haven't you another pair of pants here?"

"No, sir."

"And your coat?"

"It is a Seymour coat, sir, and it will not hide the mishap at all."

"That is bad. You should not buy such thin, tender cloth. Well, write an order to your landlady for another pair and send Dennis for them; that will settle it."

"I will do so," said he, going back to his desk with a funeral expression on his face.

As for Mr. Bounce, he sat by his table and shook his old fat sides with suppressed laughter.

Dennis was duly summoned to take the note; but there was a grin on his good-natured mug that annoyed Frank very much.

"Fut's the matter wid yer breeches, Frank?" he asked, glancing around at his mishap.

But Frank made no reply.

"Begorra, I think ye better let me take ye ter a tailor an' have 'em half soled," said he.

"Dennis, you be good enough to mind your own business and do as you are told," he said, severely.

"So I will. Shall I go an' see the Widdy Bannon about it?"

Frank turned on him with a savage, inquiring look, intended to be withering.

"Or her daughter, Maggie, which?"

"You shut up and go where that note directs."

"Haden't ye better send Tommy. He's fust rate at deliverin' letters."

Tommy had told Dennis all about it.

"Go to the devil, you"—

"All right."

"Dennis!" shouted Mr. Bounce, who had mastered his laughter.

"Coming, sur," replied Dennis.

"Stop your impertinence, sir, and do as you are directed."

"Yes, sur."

"Tell her to send my black pants that hang in my closet. She'll find them," said Frank, as parting instructions.

Then left alone he began to ponder on the subject. Taking the stool he examined it and found several small pellets of wax under the seat that had been torn out of his trousers, but how the deuce they got there unless some one had placed them there on purpose, he could not make out. But the more he thought of it, the more he became convinced that Tommy had played the joke on him.

What Dennis had said about Mrs. Bannon convinced him that Tommy had told him all about the affair, and that this was still another bitter pill for him to swallow in payment for his joke he played on Tommy.

He believed it, and began to feel sick.

In the course of an hour Dennis returned with the pants, and during his absence Frank had kept seated in a chair to hide the sad consequences he had suffered.

A change was soon effected, and once more the poor victim could stand up and show himself, or, rather, he could stand up without showing so much of himself, and he set to work with clenched teeth.

Gradually the day wore on, and the rush of business somehow drove away the fun of the morning.

But Frank did not forget his misfortune by a long shot. The more he thought of it, the more he believed that Tommy Bounce was the guilty party, and that he had stirred up the wrong passenger in playing a trick upon him.

At first he felt like putting a head on him, but as he was the nephew of his employer, it might be a hazardous undertaking, to say nothing of the chances there might be of his "getting away" with him should he attempt it. But at length he concluded that it would be best to make friends with him, especially as he had proved himself so clever at practical joking. It was a hard dose to swallow, but he half made up his mind to do it.

The remainder of the day passed without any further fun at anybody's expense, but the next day brought some more.

About noon, a large box came to the store by express, directed to Frank Hoyt. Somewhat surprised at such a thing he opened it, when he found a large package. From this he peeled another wrapper, and from that still another, and kept on at it until the package was reduced to a very small one.

The clerks were standing around, and when the last wrapper was removed, he found a dead kitten, a day or two old, and a card, on which was written, "The compliments of Mrs. Bannon."

Such a shout as went up was jolly to hear by all save the party at whose expense it was given. Frank threw it from the door, and with a curse returned to the counting room, mad enough to dance.

"What was it?" asked Mr. Bounce.

"A stupid sell, put up by some of the clerks, I suppose; a piece of the washerwoman and the wax, I dare say."

"A practical joke, eh? Well, if I have been correctly informed, you have done something in that line yourself, and at their expense."

Frank made no reply, but he thought enough to make a book.

A few days after that a big buck nigger, with the implements of a chimney-sweep slung over his shoulder, entered the store.

"Am Mr. Hoyt in?" he asked of one of the salesmen.

"Yes, in the counting-room, there."

The buck opened the glass door and entered.

"Am Mr. Hoyt hea?" he asked.

"Yes, that's my name," said Frank, looking up in surprise.

"Wal, sah, my name's Bijah Buck."

"Well, what of it?"

"I see de chimney sweep."

"Oh, you are. Well what do you want of me, I'd like to know?"

"Didn't you send fo' me ter sweep yer chimney?"

"No, sir, I did not, I have no chimney to sweep."

"Yer haint?" answered the sweep, in surprise.

"No, sir, I have not."

"You name Frank Hoyt?"

"Yes."

"An' dis yer am No. 55?"

"Yes."

"Wal, den you are de man."

"Get out I never sent for you?"

"Now say, boss, yer wouldn't go for ter fool a poo' man wid a family, and bring him clea' down from Fifty-ninth Street, would you?"

"Get out, I tell you I never sent for you?"

"Mind yer eye, boss; don't be sassy!" said he, assuming a belligerent air. "Can't fool wid every poo' nigga' dat comes 'long mind dat!"

"Some one has played a trick on you."

"I spec dat am so, an' I spec you did it."

"I tell you I never did anything of the kind, and if you don't leave the store I'll send for a policeman."

"No you won't, honey. Pay me a dollar for foolin' me, or I'll spile dat putty face ob you's afo' you can send fo' a policeman," and he threw his traps on the floor and walked up to Frank, who made haste to get out of the way.

"The easiest way is the best," thought he. "Here, here is your dollar. Take it and get."

"All right, boss; only I want yer ter understand dat yer can't fool a poo' man allus, if he be a nig."

"Go now."

"Good-by, boss," and the stalwart tramp strode out of the room.

There was more suppressed laughter as he left, which Frank did not fail to hear.

"I'm in for it," he thought, and after waiting a few moments he went to the door and called Tommy. "Tommy, I give it up. I know I made a fool of you; but I guess we are even by this time; so let us shake hands and make up."

"I've nothing to make up," replied Tommy, looking at him with honest, wondering eyes.

"No, I suppose not, by this time. But I ask your pardon for the joke I played on you, and from this time forward let us be friends. What do you say?"

"I am willing."

"Let by-goners be by-goners. I acknowledge the corn, and throw up my hands. Let us be good friends, and I will show you what life is in New York."

Nothing could have pleased Tommy better, for as yet he had only seen the surface; so he held out his hand to the vanquished joker.

"There you are, old fellow; I'll meet you half way on the grounds of friendship. The fact is, we neither of us understood the other, that's all."

"But we will do so hereafter. All right. Walk up with me to-night, will you? I'll show you a few sights as we go along."

"Good enough—I'm your humble-bee."

"Yes, yes; but I don't like your sting," thought Frank.

"All right," and shaking hands again each returned to his duties.

"There's fun ahead," thought Tommy.

"I'll astonish him," mused Frank.

CHAPTER III.

THE reader has a pretty good idea of Frank Hoyt by this time, and after the practical jokes played upon him by Tommy Bounce they became the best of friends and were out together two or three nights in the week.

In the company of such a gay boy as Frank was, Tommy proved an apt scholar and was not long in getting his country meerschaum colored and getting rid of any trace of greenness that had clung to him. In a month's time he changed wonderfully and began to wear nobby clothes, and in other respects to become a fine specimen of a young New Yorker.

Frank showed him the lions in rapid succession, visited all kinds of resorts, the highest and lowest, and Frank not only introduced him to his club, but took him around to others and showed him what rapid life is under the guise of gentility.

And Tommy was delighted with everything he saw. It was a new life to him and much more than he had ever dreamed of before.

But in the meantime he was learning the business that he was eventually to succeed his uncle in, and Frank, with all his deviltry and fast life, was a good pattern for him, as he paid strict attention to business during business hours.

Old Ebenezer Bounce, Tommy's uncle, kept a pretty sharp eye on him, and noted with pride the change that was taking place in him, although he knew but little of the lessons he was taking in the art and style of living. Tommy was sometimes out all night, but as the two young men seemed to think so much of each other, and he would say that he had stayed with Frank, the old fellow thought but little about it.

"Keep your eye out, Tommy," he would say to him once in a while. "Learn all you can; but take care that you don't get too much of any one lesson."

Of course Tommy would promise, and at the same time assure him that he was all right, and so the matter would drop. But so far as business was concerned, he had no fault to find with him.

Ebenezer Bounce was an odd character in his way, but one of his queerest peculiarities was regarding temperance. His principal words of warning to Tommy were, to shun all kinds of liquor. He pretended to be strictly temperate himself, although his jolly red nose made the idea look a trifle suspicious. The fact was, he believed in temperance for everybody but himself; and while being a passable church-member, he kept a private bottle and loved the sports of the world as well as anybody in it.

One night Tommy and Frank were at a renowned concert saloon, having some lager and "taking in" the peculiar show. There was a large crowd, and the young fellows were enjoying the situation immensely.

Gaily-dressed waiter-girls were darting around with refreshments; the place was brilliantly lighted, and every one seemed bent on getting his or her money's worth. It was one of those exhibitions that can be seen only at these peculiar variety shows, stage exhibitions being one feature of the place.

Just as a couple of boxers came out on the stage for a set-to, a party of gentlemen entered the room and took seats at a table only a little way from them. There was nothing remarkable about this, only that Tommy recognized one of them as a man he had often seen with his uncle.

"I say, Frank, do you twig his nibs?" said Tommy, calling his friend's attention to the man.

"Where?"

"Just over at the other table—the one with the plug hat and short gray hair."

"Oh, yes; old Martins—the old wretch! Why, the pious old fraud!" exclaimed Frank.

"What would he say if he knew we were looking at him?"

"Yes—and what would Ebenezer say if he knew his friend was in such a place?—ah! see there! Hanged if he hasn't got his arm around the waist of that pretty piece of calico."

"The old goat! Keep quiet; we'll have some fun with him yet. I wonder who the others are?" he added.

"Oh, some sleek-faced frauds like himself I suppose."

"Time!" shouted the director of amusements at this moment, and instantly all attention was directed to the boxers who approached and went through the

usual formality of shaking hands before commencing operations.

The sparring was good and was loudly applauded.

"Good, by gracious!" exclaimed one of the party who was seated back to Tommy.

"First-rate," replied another.

"By gracious, I had rather see a rattling good boxing match than anything in the world, but a horse race. Ah! here comes our drinks."

"I say, Frank, whose voice is that?" asked Tommy catching his friend's arm.

"By Jove, it sounds wonderfully like"—

"Time!" again shouted the manager, calling up the boxers for another round.

This round was a much livelier one than the first one had been, and excited much interest and loud comment. Especially was this the case with the party that had attracted the attention of our friends.

"What was you going to say?" asked Tommy, as soon as the director had ordered a "walk-around," and the gladiators had returned to their corners.

"I was about remarking that his voice sounds wonderfully like your uncle's."

"That's so; but of course you see it isn't him."

"Hark! Do you hear that?"

"By Jove! That does sound like Eben. Can you see his face?"

"No. Hark!"

"Here, my darling, bring us up a large bottle of"—

"Mumm," said the party whose voice had attracted their attention.

"I tell you what it is, Tommy, that is a jolly old party with lots of soap."

"You bet. And the waiters know it evidently, for they are swarming around them lovingly."

"Time! Wind up!" was shouted, and again all eyes were directed to the boxers.

The "wind-up" was even better than the first two rounds had been, and created much excitement in the audience.

The comments of the old party were loud and earnest, and on the strength of it another bottle of wine was ordered.

"That's the old man as sure as guns," said Tommy after listening again. "The old boss; well, well! Oh, my prophetic soul, my uncle! My uncle with a wig on."

This they soon found out to be the truth. Ebenezer Bounce was there in disguise and evidently bent on seeing fun.

"Now, then, I'm beat," said Tommy. "The ideal the sly old rat. Why, it was only last night that he was giving me a lecture about going around to these places and drinking, and here he is, in disguise, and taking it in himself," and he raised his hands in horror and surprise.

"Look out. Don't let them see us."

"No, that would spoil all. But they are all too much taken up with their wine and girls to notice anything else. Now then, let's see. How shall we manage it?"

"What do you mean?"

"Why we must play some joke on them."

"No, no, Tommy; excuse me; it may do for you, but, if I took a hand in the game he might fire me out of my situation," said Frank.

"That is so. I never thought of that."

"And I guess you had better not attempt anything anyhow, Tommy. We can have him dead to rights without letting him know it."

"Nonsense, what good would that do us? No, sir, I'm going to have some fun out of this lark of the old man's. Just wait a bit."

By this time the party had grown very mellow and were ordering wine and treating people at a decidedly lively rate. They were making business good and having a good time generally.

Presently Tommy discovered a man to whom he had been introduced, and beckoning him over to his table he asked him to have a drink.

The man was a detective from headquarters—a jolly, wide-awake fellow, and they soon came to an understanding about the party in question.

"Yes, I twigged them some time ago. Jolly old boys, arn't they?" said the officer.

"Yes; and if I could only pull the old man's wig off, I'd give anything. It would be rich fun."

"Is he your uncle?"

"Yes; a pious old goat, who lectures me about being fast, and comes up here himself in disguise and goes it as you see. Oh, if I only could secure that wig."

"I guess I can work it," said the officer.

"Do you think so?" he asked eagerly.

"If 'Big Sal' is here, I can. I saw her a few moments ago with just gin enough in to make her ready for anything."

"That's it. Let her pretend that he's her husband, and go for his wig."

"Big Sal" was soon found, and promised a five-dollar bill if she worked the racket.

As the detective had said, she was just "full" enough to be ready for anything. A plan of action was agreed upon, and she edged her way towards the table.

Going close up behind Mr. Bounce, she seized both hat and wig, at the same time yelling:

"Oh, I've got you now, Bill Strong!"

Mr. Bounce leaped to his feet, and in an instant there was a wild hubbub all around.

"Give me that!" yelled Bounce.

Tommy rushed into the crowd and threw himself before his uncle.

"Stand back! I'll stand for this gentleman," said he, facing the crowd in a boxing attitude.

"Put him out!"

"I—I beg pardon, I thought you was my Bill as skulkin' away from me."

"Get out of this," said Tommy.

The next minute the proprietor was in the crowd to settle the disturbance. "Big Sal" was put out of the place, all the while protesting and trying to make a drunken apology.

"What! Uncle Ebenezer!" exclaimed Tommy, turning round and appearing greatly surprised at seeing him.

"Hush!" replied his uncle.

"Oh, all right; mum's the word, Unc," said he, turning away.

By this time everybody was looking at the unfortunate merchant, many of whom knew him. Of course it soon became understood that the old fellow was out for a lark, and everybody commented on it in their own way, but that much-looked-at party got out of their way without loss of time.

"Big Sal" got her five dollars, but she was never allowed in the place again. As for the proprietor he was exceedingly mad about the affair, as he is very particular to have his patrons treated well, and as soon as the party left he began to eye Tommy and his friends as they sat there by the table.

"I say," said he, approaching the officer and calling him by name. "Do you know that party?"

"No, who are they?"

"Why that old duffer with the wig is one of the richest men in New York; a nice, old chap, only out for a little lark. Confound that drunken old fagot, to get it into her head that he was her lover in disguise. Do you know them?" he asked, addressing Tommy.

"Well, yes, I know one of them."

"I thought I saw you talking to old Bounce. Do you suppose she was put up to it by anybody?"

"Perhaps so."

"No; she is full of jig-water and probably thought that he was her husband," said the officer.

The proprietor looked from one to the other just as though he thought it quite likely that they knew something more about the affair.

But neither of the party gave it way, and so he retired none the wiser. The party sat there and enjoyed themselves for quite a time after the occurrence, laughing at the fun it had made and speculating about the result, and then not caring to meet his uncle, he went home and stayed the remainder of the night with Frank.

As for Mr. Bounce, a more chapfallen man was never seen in the world. To think that his little game had been discovered, and he brought face to face with his nephew whom he had lectured so often, was too much. Besides that, the thing would get noised around, and, perhaps get into the papers as a bit of comic scandal, and, altogether he went home in a bad state of mind.

But he was equal to the occasion after sleeping on it, at all events so far as Tommy was concerned, for when he came to the store the next day, he sent for both he and Frank.

"I wish to explain why I was at that place last night, for such actions on my part seem a variance with my life conduct. I assumed a slight disguise for two reasons, chief of which was, that I might be enabled to confirm my suspicions as to several of my clerks, whom I suspect of going there and to like resorts, and had it not been for that unfortunate woman mistaking me for another, I should have succeeded and escaped unknown. At all events, I found you both there, and I wish to say that if I hear of your going there again I shall take measures regarding it that may be unpleasant. Do you both understand me?"

"Oh, yes, we will obey you, sir. The fact is, uncle I am to blame for going there. But I only wished to see a little of that kind of life, and so got Frank to go along with me," said Tommy.

"That may all be, but you must understand me in regard to the future?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, then, that is all. Return to your duties and never mention the subject to anyone," said he, waving them away.

"Well, well. The old fraud!" mused Tommy, as he returned to his work. "I thought I knew what cheek was, but I am mistaken. Ah! if he only knew all about it."

A day or two afterwards the *Daily News* contained a full account of the affair, under the caption of "Fun on the Bowery."

The old man's name was not given, but he was described so accurately that most any of his friends would know it, so he sent and bought up the whole edition, and paid them for leaving it out of the other editions.

But Tommy obtained a copy, and the next day sent it by mail to his aunt.

The result was a little bed-room riot, she accusing him, and he denying everything.

But the trouble all blew over in a few days, and Ebenezer smiled again, and Tommy, thinking he had been punished enough, let the matter drop, and turned his attention to his fellow clerks when he felt a surplus of devilry in him.

A few weeks from that time his aunt and cousins went to Saratoga to spend the heated term, leaving only he and Tommy at home to look after the house and servants.

This left the old man more free to go than ever and he was not a bit slow in improving the opportunity.

One Sunday Tommy took it into his head to go down to Coney Island.

Frank was off on his annual vacation, and he had no one in particular to go with, and as the day was warm he thought he couldn't pass it better than at this famous resort down the bay.

Dressing himself carefully he was just coming down stairs when he met his uncle, also dressed, it being near church time.

"Ah, uncle. Going to church?"

"Certainly, my boy. Never miss a Sabbath. Are you going to church?"

"Oh, certainly. Thought I'd go over to Brooklyn and hear Parson Beecher."

"That's right, my boy. You know I don't insist

upon you going to any particular church, although I had rather have you go to mine, only I wish you to go to some one every Sunday. Every young man should do so."

"Yes, sir."

"Warm day."

"Very warm. Good-bye."

In a few moments he was quietly on his way to Coney Island, as were thousands of others, and in less than half an hour his uncle and three of his chums were seated in a carriage and being driven to the same place, but as usual on a high old time.

Tommy went by the boat, while they went by the longer road through Brooklyn.

Arriving at the steamboat landing he took a stroll up the beach towards the upper end of the Island, intending to return by the cars.

The day was a glorious one, and hundreds of people had flocked to this near-by resort to enjoy the bracing air and the delightful bathing.

The bathing especially interested Tommy, for he had never seen anything like it before, and the comical antics of those in the surf was enough to interest his fun-loving disposition.

So he walked leisurely up the beach, stopping now and then at some of the refreshment booths that line the way, until finally he reached a larger place, a hotel, in fact, and taking a seat on the piazza he called for a glass of lager and threw himself down in the shade to enjoy it.

There was a large number of people in the bar-room, and some of them was very noisy, although their hilarity did not attract Tommy, who was busy with his thoughts and enjoyment.

Presently he heard a voice that he recognized, although he could not see the owner of it. The voice was endeavoring to sing a comic song, "My heart is true to Poll," and several others were doing the best they could with the chorus.

Tommy became a little interested and listened.

"My heart is true to Poll,

My heart is true to Poll,

Let the wind blow high or the wind blow low,

My heart is true to Poll."

"Again, my prophetic soul, my uncle," mused Tommy. "This is the way he goes to church, is it? About the same way I go. Oh, the old rascal, I wish Frank was here to enjoy it. But I guess I will lay low and say nothing."

Again that chorus:

"My heart is true to Poll,

My heart is true to Poll,

Let the wind blow high or the wind blow low,

My heart is true to Poll."

"By gracious, I know a certain Poll that wouldn't think you was true to her if she could see you now," said Tommy.

"Come, landlord, set 'em up again," he heard the old fellow say. "Set 'em up for everybody in the house!"

Then followed a chorus of orders, blended or mixed with the assertion that several hearts were true to Poll, and these, together with the clinking of glasses made a strange medley.

"Come, everybody drink!" he again shouted, and several took a second drink on account of making it a practice of never refusing.

"Toss in one yourself, lan'lord!"

"Thank you. Here she goes!"

"Let her go! Come, has everybody had his whistle wet? for—

"My heart is true to Poll,

My heart is true to Poll,

Let the wind blow high or the wind blow low,

My heart is true to Poll."

This chorus being finished in the barroom, Mr. Bounce took it out on to the piazza as a sort of a call to rally anybody that hadn't drank.

Tommy happened to be the only person on the piazza, and he was seated back to his uncle as he approached, still singing and as full as a goat.

"I shay, young fellow. Praps you don't know that everybody is drinkin', and that

"My heart is true to Poll,

My heart is true to Poll,

Let the wind blow high or the wind blow low,

My heart is true to Poll."

Come along; brace up, an' don't take a shingle off the landlord's house. Hey! don't yer hear me? don't you know that

"My heart is true to —

The devil!" he exclaimed, for just then Tommy turned and faced him.

"Well, yes, uncle Eb, I don't mind if I do toss in one with you, seeing that church is out," said Tommy, with perfect composure.

"How in thunder'd you come here?"

"I came by the boat, sir."

"Why, why, I thought you was going to church," stammered the old man.

"Well, sir, I did intend to go, but as you said you were going, I thought one of the family could make it all right, and so I took a trip down here."

"Devilish funny," mused his uncle.

"Devilish pleasant, I should call it."

"Well, never mind. Come in and have a glass of lager. Shan't let you drink anything stronger."

"Oh, I never do, sir."

"That's right. But, mind now, not a word about this."

"Not a word. I'm fly to all these little rackets. Don't worry yourself on that account."

"That's right, Tommy. Come along."

Tommy went in and drank his beer, while his uncle was considerably bothered and hardly knew what to say himself.

"I say, uncle Eb, don't you think I had better take my vacation from to-morrow?"

"Yes, certainly, you can go to-morrow just as well as not," replied he, only too glad for an excuse for changing the subject and getting rid of him until the thing had been forgotten.

And the next day Tommy Bounce started for the country to spend a two weeks' vacation, a vacation he most likely would not have gotten had it not been for this little affair at Coney Island.

CHAPTER IV.

TOMMY BOUNCE started for home after catching his uncle Ebenezer at the Coney Island lark, both because he wanted to go, and his uncle also wanted him to, quite as bad.

The old fellow had learned to like his handsome, mischievous nephew very much, but somehow or other he had such a way of turning up at odd places and catching him at his little pranks, that he concluded that he should enjoy the absence of his wife and daughters quite as much if Tommy was also away.

"Stay until you get ready to come back," he said, as Tommy shook hands with him. "I know your father and mother want to see you ever so much, besides it isn't safe for a young person who has always lived in the country to remain in New York during the heated term. Give my love to 'em all, and—I—I say, Tommy, here's fifty dollars for pocket money while you're gone. And—I—I say, Tommy, don't ever mention that little Coney Island affair, will you?"

"Never—I'm mum. Good-bye. Thanks for this pocket piece, and I will drop you a line just before I start to return," said Tommy.

Thus they parted.

"His nibs is glad to get rid of me while the folks are away," mused Tommy. "Well, well, all right; I suppose it is right for him to go it while he is young."

"There, confound him, I hope he'll stay a month. I don't feel exactly safe when he's around. He is such a sober, sly cuss, that I can't have the least bit of a racket with my old chums, without expecting him to turn up at every moment," said the old chap, as he started for business.

Tommy remained at home two weeks, during which he had a splendid time, and of course astonished his friends and acquaintances by his changed appearance and stylish clothes; but he was not enjoying himself a whit better than his uncle Ebenezer was in New York.

Business was dull, and the old fellow was "taking in" Long Branch, Cape May, Coney Island, Bay Side, and the various other resorts around the city, in company with his cousins; in fact, he was at Long Branch more than in New York.

On his return, Tommy (who had come on the same train that brought the letter that he had promised to write before coming) found that his uncle was at Long Branch, having left word with his clerks that he was feeling very ill, and might be gone several days.

"I'll go down and see him," said Tommy, "for he may need me."

"Not much, I guess," replied Frank Hoyt, with a peculiar wink.

"To be sure he may. What a shame it would be if the old fellow should find himself unable to keep his end up with his friends."

Frank laughed.

"Who, then, but his living nephew should be near to assist him, and help maintain the reputation of the family?"

"Perhaps you are right."

"What hotel is he stopping at?"

"The West End."

"All right; I'll gradually dawn upon him."

He took the afternoon boat, and enjoyed the delightful sail down the bay, arriving at the famous watering place about five o'clock.

One of the last things that Ebenezer Bounce had done before going there, was to write a letter to his wife who was enjoying herself at Saratoga, telling her how lonesome he was at the absence of his wife and darlings; how he had moped around the house evenings having no desire to go out, and that he was not feeling a bit well in bodily health.

This letter did not alarm Mrs. Bounce in the least, for she had received many such from him during her life, although she could never detect when she returned that he had lost any flesh during her absence.

Well, Tommy nosed around the town for an hour or two, and finally took a room at the Mansion House, some distance away from the one where his uncle was stopping.

In the evening he went out to see the sights by gas light and naturally strayed over to the West End Hotel.

Watching closely, so as to see without being seen himself, he soon discovered his sickly uncle surrounded by about a dozen other sickly old bucks, standing before a bar, talking loudly about the races, which they had attended that afternoon, and drinking champagne.

It was a sickly looking party indeed, and as Tommy watched them through one of the windows, his young heart almost bled for them.

Some of them were unsteady on their pins, even, and seemed to have almost lost their power of speech.

He watched them for quite a while, and finally his uncle attracted his special attention.

"Well, boys," said he, "I have won four thousand dollars to-day, and I propose to treat you to one of the highest old suppers to-morrow night that you ever tickled your bellies with."

"Bully for you, Eh," said several.

"I shall give the orders to-night and order plater for twenty," he added.

"And wine for how many?"

"For fifty, for every mother's son of you can drink more than any two men," was the reply, whereat everybody laughed and another cork flew out as though in response.

Tommy felt very sorry for his old uncle; he did seem so sick and dispirited.

After watching them for some time he turned away and returned to his own hotel.

The night was bright with gas-light and moon, and the season being at its best, the roads were filled with rich turnouts and the seashore lined with gay promenaders.

Tommy, of course, could not think of going to bed, but his first errand was to the telegraph office, where, after consulting railway time-tables for awhile, he wrote and sent the following dispatch to his aunt at Saratoga Springs.

"DEAR WIFE:—I am very ill—doctors say dangerously. Come to me by the first train in the morning."

"EBENEZER BOUNCE.

"West End Hotel, Long Branch, N. Y."

After setting this bit of mischief afloat he walked out upon the bluff to enjoy the cool air and the delightful evening.

He took a seat in one of the summer houses that overlooked the ocean, and in a short time was lost in the surrounding beauties.

But the beauties of nature could not charm him for long. The spirit of mischief would bubble up in spite of sentiment or poetry, and he began to look around him to see if there was any fun to be had.

Everybody seemed to be promenading in couples, and using all the big words they could think of about the balmy winds, the sounding sea, and the silver moonlight that touched up the scene.

Some were seated in the shadows of the summer house, making love or talking other nonsense, and a few were like himself—alone.

One old fellow attracted Tommy's attention particularly. He was laying on the grass, flat on his back, evidently asleep, with his hat over his face to bother the mosquitos.

He pondered in his mind for some time how he could have some fun at the old chap's expense, and finally an idea struck him.

About ten feet from where he lay sat a young fellow on a camp stool, looking out upon the ocean and evidently deep in dreaming.

Tommy happened to think of a fish line that he had in his pocket, and taking it out he unwound it. It had two hooks, and taking one of them off he fastened it to the other end of the line.

He stole carefully up to where the old fellow lay asleep, and cautiously fastened one of the hooks into the rim of the hat.

This done he waited a few moments and then sauntered over with the other hook in his hand, and without exciting any suspicion in the dreaming youth who still gazed out upon the ocean, he fastened it into his coat tail.

Then he walked around the grounds for a few moments and slowly returned to his seat to see what the result would be.

The young man dreamed and gazed for about five minutes more, when he sneezed. This seemed to awaken him to the fact that he was taking cold. So he stood up, took his camp-stool and started for the hotel.

The old fellow's hat started to go too.

This waked him up, and he yelled, but seeing his hat shooting away from him, he stopped and leaped to his feet.

"Here! bring back that hat! stop it!" he yelled, as soon as he found that he was not dreaming, or that a big mosquito was not carrying it away so as to get at him better.

"Stop it!"

This brought several people to the spot all inquiring what the matter was.

"My hat: See it go! Stop it!" he shouted.

They looked and saw the hat following along after the pensive young man, who, still in his dreams, did not notice it.

They were amazed at the sight, and made no attempt to recover the article, and the old fellow getting mad, made a dive after it himself.

Overtaking it, he made several attempts to pick it up, but was a trifle behind it each time. Finally he got desperate, and planted his big foot upon it, and flattened it to the ground.

"There, confound you," he hissed.

This sudden stoppage produced a sensation at the young fellow's coat-tails, which frightened him into running a few yards before recovering himself, and the result was, he tore a piece out of the flattened hat, and still retained the hook and line.

"Hello there; what are you doing?" he called.

"What in thunder are you doing?" howled the old man.

"Go to blazes!"

"Go yourself, our come back here and I will make it hot as you want it, you beat," roared the old man, attempting to straighten out his flattened cady.

"What's the matter with you, anyway," asked the young fellow, coming back. "What did you pull my coat for?"

"Coat be hanged! What did you pull my hat for?"

"Your hat be blowed! I never knew you had a hat. But somebody pulled my coat and"—

"And somebody pulled my hat, sir, and if I only knew it was you, I'd burst your crust."

"Would you? I'll bet not."

"What!" yelled the old chap, making a dive for the young one, who was instantly on his guard.

Two or three bystanders caught hold of the mad old man and held him back.

"He has insulted me! Let me at him!"

"Yes, let him at me if he wants to come, but I never insulted him."

Tommy got into the crowd.

"Didn't you pull off my hat and drag it along?"

"No, but you pulled my coat."

"It's allie, I wasn't near you."

"Neither was I near you or anyone else."

At this point the bystanders began to investigate and they found the fish line attached to the coat with a hook on each end of it. Then the affair was understood, and it became evident that some one had played a trick upon them both.

This produced a hearty laugh and finally the old fellow held out his hand and apologized for being so hasty, and they all retired to the hotel in better spirits than ever.

But who could have played the trick? That was the question.

Tommy followed them back the hotel and the moment they came into the light, what was his astonishment at recognizing his old schoolmate and chum, George Dovey.

And he had played the trick on him!

The meeting between them was of the warmest and most cordial kind. They shook hands for several minutes, all the while asking questions about each other.

"By-the-by, Tommy, somebody played a—I say, have you been out on the bluff this morning?" asked Dovey, suddenly.

"Out by the summer house?"

"Yes, out in front here!"

"Oh, yes, I was out there a little while!"

"That settles it," exclaimed Dovey laughing. "I might have known that you was around."

"Come and take some lemonade; I didn't know it was you, old boy, or I wouldn't have done it for the world. But the truth is I am a stranger here and was lonesome."

"All right, I'll forgive you, but if the old chap knew who it was he'd get the worth of his hat out of you I am afraid."

The two friends went laughing into the bar-room of the hotel to get their flesh-colored lemonade, while the old fellow went to his room to get another hat.

"Now, old fellow, tell me all about yourself," said Dovey, after their drink.

Tommy proceeded to do so, after which Dovey related his experience since they had parted at school in Andover, and for two hours did they drink flesh-colored lemonade and talk over old times.

Dovey had come to the Branch to spend a few weeks with his aunt, and was delighted at meeting his old chum so opportunely. It was late before they went to bed, but in course of their conversation Tommy had told him all about his "sick" uncle, and gave an insight into the little surprise he had cooked up for him the following night.

"Just the same old Tommy Bounce, I see," said Dovey.

"I should be if I had you with me. I wish we could be together all the time."

"So do I; I have got sick and tired of business, and long to travel."

"We will think further of this. I am sick of it also, and long to have some adventure. I don't want to get down to business yet."

"No; a fellow wants to see something of the world before he settles down in a counting-room," said Dovey earnestly.

The next day they drove around together, bathed and attended the races at the Monmouth Race Course, enjoying themselves first-rate, though in quite a different way from what they had ever done before.

George Dovey had changed quite as much as Tommy had, and two more stylish or good-looking fellows could not be found at Long Branch.

But when night came they went over to the West End Hotel to see how the grand supper came off, and what resulted from it.

It was spread in a private parlor, and a jollier set of old roosters never shoved their legs under the same table.

It was fully under weigh when the two young men arrived there. They could not see into the room, but only a blind stood between the feasters and the promenaders who paced up and down the broad piazza.

But although they could not see they could hear all they wanted. They took seats under the window and waited events and laughed at the jokes which passed around the table.

In the course of an hour they began to get very mellow, especially Ebenezer Bounce, the sick man. He was the gayest of the gay, and when somebody proposed his very good health he struggled to his feet to reply to it.

"Get on a chair!" shouted one of the company.

"Get on the table," shouted another.

"Give him a lift."

To oblige his friends, Eben got upon a chair and made his little speech.

In the meantime his wife arrived in hot and dusty haste from Saratoga, having ridden since morning to reach the bedside of her sick husband.

Leaping from the carriage the shouts of wild laughter was the first thing that greeted her ear.

"How unfeeling pleasure-seekers are," she muttered to herself. "They don't care whether a person is sick or not."

She stopped in the hallway and called one of the colored servants to her.

"Mr. Bounce?"

"Yes'm."

"How is he?"

"Pretty good, I guess," said the darkey, while a broad grin overspread his features.

Tommy and Dovey were taking it all in.

"Take me to his room at once."

"I beg pardon, ma'am, but will you send in your card?"

"Card, sir! I am his wife," said she, with some turbulence in her words.

Again the darkey grinned all over his face, and half pointed to the private parlor where the supper was going on, and where Ebenezer was even then making his little speech.

She recognized his voice and looked puzzled.

"Is he not ill?" she asked at length.

"Guess not, ma'am," said the grinning darkey. "He seems putty healthy 'bout now."

Just then the old fellow was warming to his work, and the table was in a roar at his humorous speech.

Mrs. Bounce waved the waiter away, and stepped to the door and listened. Her husband was just saying:

"Yes, my friends, women are great institutions. They smooth out our wrinkles and our hair; they keep money moving, and their husbands, too. They are the spice of our lives."

"All-spice!" shouted some one.

"Yes, all-spice. They are all that a man can wish and more too, sometimes. But my friends, we all know how especially interesting she is when she is enjoying herself five hundred miles away, as our wives are at this moment."

"Hi! hi!" they shouted and pounded the dishes in applause.

While the noise was at its height, Mrs. Bounce opened the door and strode into the room with the majesty of an injured queen.

Ebenezer was about to continue his speech, when on raising his eyes he beheld his wife.

Whether it was flesh or spirit he did not know, but either one or the other was too much for him, and he wilted like a young onion in a July sun, and tumbled out of his chair over upon the table, upsetting it and creating a dreadful smash and much confusion.

Everybody leaped to their feet and the waiters rushed in to see what the matter was. Several of the company recognized the lady, and they in turn were somewhat taken aback at her sudden entry into their festive gathering.

As for poor old Bounce, he struggled to his feet from under the overturned table and broken dishes, and turned to look at the form he knew so well.

His eyes protruded, and his under-jaw fell, and a more woe-begone and comical-looking subject was never seen in the world.

The eyes of his wife flashed, but her lips moved not. She was too full to speak, and the company was too full to "listen," although the shock had somewhat sobered Mr. Bounce.

"Mahalia!" murmured he, at length, "I—I—you—that is"—

"Ebenezer Bounce, I am shocked and overwhelmed," she said, in a tone as severe as her looks were.

"So—so be I, Mahalia. I"—he ventured,

"A very sick man you are, indeed."

"Yes, Mahalia."

"Are you not ashamed of yourself—you, the father of a family, and a church member?"

"But I"—

"Don't 'but, me, sir. How dare you?" she exclaimed, fiercer than before, and at the same time advancing towards him.

"I—I don't. What brought you here, Mahalia?" he asked, gradually recovering himself.

"Your dispatch stating that you were dangerously ill, and I should say you were."

"I—I sent you no dispatch."

"You did. Look there!" she said, handing Tommy's dispatch to one of the party to read. "But I suppose you were in about the same condition as you now are when you sent it."

The gentleman who took the dispatch read it aloud to the party.

"I never sent it. It is a fraud!" exclaimed Mr. Bounce.

"But you wrote me only the other day that you were sick—that you spent your evenings at home, moping around and bewailing the absence of your family. I just heard some of your wailing, and it was very fatherly indeed."

"But I never sent that dispatch, I say."

"Oh, you have been imposed upon," said one of the party, and this idea gradually took root.

As for poor Bounce, the imposition almost made him sick.

What to say or do he knew not; he only wished he was under ground five hundred feet.

But that party came to a sudden end, and the giver of it tremblingly escorted his indignant wife up to his room, where she resumed her remarks, and made them pointed enough to raise what little hair he had left.

The remainder of the company retired to the bar-room to laugh and talk the affair over.

It was the source of more fun than they had ever had thrust upon them at one time before, and, in a short time, it was known to all the guests in the hotel, and soon spread to others.

Newspaper correspondents got hold of it, and worked it up in a lively style, and it became the talk of the town in a short time.

But the question was, who had perpetrated the joke? but he only wished he could lay hands on him.

The next day he returned to New York, and his wife went back to Saratoga. But he was cured, and went back to his business, resolved on having no more friends or friendly rackets.

Tommy and Dovey enjoyed the sport with all their old-time relish, and laughed themselves sore over the affair as they walked back to their hotel.

The next morning Tommy took the first train back

to New York, in order to avoid his sick uncle. Dovey accompanied him, just for the trip, and between them they talked up what they would, or would like to do in the future.

Both agreed that a life of adventure was just what they wanted, and now the question was, how to enter upon it, and where to go.

The wild West and California appeared to be the direction, and the next question was, how to get there.

"We'll fetch it," said Dovey, as they parted.

"We will," replied Tommy, bravely.

CHAPTER V.

THE reader who recalleth the events of the last portion of this history will not be in the least surprised to know that Ebenezer Bounce was in a very bad humor for a few days following his grand supper at Long Branch.

True, his wife had returned to Saratoga again, but the evidences of her visit were quite as plentiful as might be seen after a prairie fire.

A more crestfallen, disgusted mortal it would be hard to find, and, strangely enough, he believed that one of his friends, whom he had invited to partake of his hospitality on that occasion, had betrayed him to his wife, and summoned her to his supposed sick bedside.

He almost foreswore friendship, and in his mind resolved to have nothing to do with the man thereafter who had caused him so much trouble.

But just before he clenched that resolution in his mind, Tom Martin, one of his chums, called on him at his store.

The meeting between them was not very cordial, so far as Ebenezer Bounce was concerned, and he made no bones of accusing him of either knowing of or participating in the betrayal.

"Now, Eben, I tell you that you make a mistake," replied Martin.

"I don't believe I do," said Mr. Bounce.

"But I know you do. If there had been any job I should have been likely to have known it, shouldn't I?"

"Of course, and I haven't the slightest idea but what you did know all about it."

"Now, Eb, I give you my word of honor as a man, that I never knew anything about it, and I don't believe that any of the rest of them did."

"Oh, nonsense!"

"I mean it."

"Then tell me, if you can, how in the name of the devil himself, she received that dispatch which brought her all the way from Saratoga to Long Branch?"

"Somebody outside of our party must have sent it."

"Bosh!"

"I tell you yes."

"Who would have gone to the trouble, provided they knew of her whereabouts, to send for her in such a way, except some of your incorrigible practical jokers? I tell you the thing is as plain as the nose on your face," said the old man; and as Martin's nose was very large and red, it answered as a powerful illustration.

"You may think so, but I do not."

"All right, I think so. A joke is a joke, and all well enough when it don't drag a person into unenviable notoriety or make them trouble."

"That is so, and I know from talking with the gang, that they all sympathize with you, and regard it as a cursed mean piece of business."

"Well, it's fortunate that they have come to their senses, even if it is too late. But I am done with them, I haven't been on a racket this summer that there hasn't been something unpleasant connected with it."

"Well, it's somebody outside of the gang, that I am sure of."

"All right, but I don't think so. Who else knew about my wife being at Saratoga, about my writing to her of my ill health?"

"But somebody might have known it. I say, Eb, did you ever suspect that good-looking, honest-faced nephew of yours?"

"What, Tommy?" asked the old man, turning quickly upon his friend.

"Yes, I have sometimes thought that he was at the bottom of more than you suspected."

"Well, but he wasn't there."

"But I say he was."

"How do you know it?"

"He was seen by several."

"Nonsense. He has just returned from a visit down east."

"Now you ask him if he wasn't there."

The old man was thoughtful and made no reply.

"Ask him."

"Well, to satisfy you I will," said he, at length, although it was quite evident that he wished to be satisfied himself.

Opening a window of the counting-room he called out into the store for his nephew. Tommy responded quickly and cheerfully.

"Come here one moment," said he, and the young man entered the counting-room.

Frank Hoyt, the bookkeeper, had overheard a portion of the conversation which took place in the private office, and suspecting that Tommy had been up to one of his jokes again, he could hardly keep a straight face as he bent over his books.

"When did you return from your visit to your parents?" asked his uncle, as Tommy entered the private office.

"Last Tuesday morning, sir," replied Tommy.

"Did you go to Long Branch after your return?"

"Yes, sir."

Tommy looked honest enough to swear by, but in

spite of that, Mr. Martin could not help smiling any more than Frank could.

"You see, sir, I had heard so much about this renowned seaside resort that I thought I would take a run down to see it before I again settled down to business."

"Certainly. How long did you remain there?" asked his uncle.

"I went down Tuesday afternoon, and came back to the city on Thursday morning."

"Oh, you did, eh?" asked the old man, although he didn't care to look at Martin.

"Yes, sir, I found you was not at home, and so thought I would improve the opportunity."

"Where did you suppose I was?"

"Of course I had no means of knowing. But I trust I haven't offended you, sir."

"Oh, no, only I wished to know for a certain reason. Did you see anybody there you knew?"

"Yes, sir, I accidentally met an old schoolmate by the name of George Dovey there."

"And you heard nothing about me there?"

"No, sir. Were you there?" he asked, in well simulated surprise.

"Yes, I was there for a day or two. That's well," he said dismissing him.

Tommy went from the room, still looking as honest as a parrot. Frank cocked his eye up at him as he went past the window, just long enough to get a quick wink from him, and then kept on with his writing, while Tommy returned to his work again.

"There, didn't I tell you," said Martin, as soon as they were alone once more.

"Tell me what? There is nothing so very wonderful as I can see about my nephew's being at Long Branch. But you heard what he said. Of course he had no hand in the matter."

"Well, I'm not so sure about that. I tell you he is a deep one if he does look honest. Do you remember the snap at that saloon where you got the wig pulled off?"

"Yes, why?"

"He was there, wasn't he?"

"Yes, and flew to my defense the moment he saw that it was me."

"Yes, I know it. Very good on his part, but, between you and I, I have heard that he put the job up himself."

"Nonsense, sir, nonsense!"

"Fact."

"But how could he? He couldn't have known me in that disguise."

"But he did, though, and I can prove it."

"Prove it?"

"Well, there is reasonable proof of it."

"It must be a mistake, Tom."

"Not the way I look at it. And I believe that he was at the bottom of this affair at the Branch. You see, according to his own showing, he was there in time to learn about the supper, and just for a lark he might have sent a despatch to your wife."

Mr. Bounce was silent and thoughtful, and seeing that the idea was not wholly lost on his friend, Martin withdrew, promising to see him again before long.

"Good gracious!" thought the old merchant, "can it be possible that Tommy played that trick on me? His father always said that he was the greatest rogue alive, and just like me," he added, and smiled in spite of himself. "I will keep a sharp eye on Master Tommy in the future," he said, turning away to business.

Tommy wore a smile during the remainder of that day, and on their way up town he told Frank all about it, and together they had a good laugh.

The next day he received a letter from Dovey, going further into their proposed ramble away to some wild country, and Tommy again set himself to work on the problem of how he should be able to do it.

"By the great horn spoon!" he exclaimed at length, "I think I have it. Where's Uncle Eben?" he said, going towards his private office.

The old gentleman was engaged upon some letters, and was alone. Tommy opened the door and walked in.

"Well, Tommy," said the old gentleman, looking up.

"Are you busy, sir?"

"Well, not dreadfully so. What is it?"

"I would like to have a talk with you."

"A talk with me?" he asked suddenly, for in an instant he suspected something, and was on his guard.

"Yes, sir."

The old gent eyed him closely, but he looked even more honest and earnest than ever.

"What about, Tommy?" he asked, at length.

"About business, sir."

"Oh, about business, eh? Well, I am always ready to talk with you about business. I am glad to see that you have already got a good insight into it, and as I have counted upon you as my successor one of these days, I want you to become the master of it. See?"

"Yes, sir, and it is on this very matter that I wish to speak with you. I wish to become a drummer."

"A what! A drummer?" asked the old man, starting back and looking at the young man in surprise.

"Yes, sir, I wish to travel and see the country, and at the same time become familiar with this part of the business."

"Why, Tommy Bounce!" exclaimed the old man.

"You must admit, sir, that the business might be increased in the West," he persisted in his most eloquent tones.

"And you wish to become a drummer?"

"Yes, sir, I am sure I could get up a good trade and enjoy myself at the same time."

"But what would your parents say?" asked his uncle, half inclined to favor the idea.

"Oh, for that matter, they would have no objection if you favored it. In fact, they consider that I belong

to you, to do with me as you see fit—so far as learning the business is concerned."

"Well, when do you propose to start?"

"In a week or so, or as soon as I can get ready."

"But you know nothing about the business of drumming up trade. What sort of an outfit do you require?"

"Two strong trunks, made to carry samples in, a few letters of introduction and credit, together with the requisite amount of cheek."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the old gent, "and do you think you have the requisite amount?"

"Well I guess what little I have got, well cultivated, will carry me through all right," replied Tommy. His uncle laughed heartily.

"Well, I'll think about it."

"And do you think favorably of it now?"

"Well, yes, if you can pay your way and at the same time become familiar with the country and the state of trade in other cities. I guess I'll let you go out and try your hand a few weeks."

"Thank you, sir. I'll begin to select my samples at once," said he, rising to go.

"All right."

Tommy returned to the store full of delight, while his uncle, now strongly suspecting that he had played several practical jokes on him, concluded that it would be quite as well to have him out of the way, at least until his family returned in the fall.

Tommy at once wrote for Dovey to come up to the city the next day, while his uncle made out a list of goods, drew drafts, and in various ways made preparations to send our hero away as a drummer for the hardware business.

Dovey was delighted and at once set about making preparations to accompany him, although it was all unknown to his uncle.

At the end of a week they were all ready and great excitement was manifested in the store, and many jokes passed around among the salesmen at Tommy's expense.

But Tommy knew what he was doing, and took their jokes all in good part.

"I wish you were going along with me, Frank," said he, when about ready to start.

"So do I, Tommy, for it will be as lonesome as a junk shop here after you have gone," replied Frank.

"Faith it will, sure. I'm after failin' it now," said the porter, Dennis, with feeling.

"Feeling what, Dennis?" asked Tommy.

"The lonesomeness, sure."

"Oh, well, you will have Frank here and when you feel exceedingly lonesome you can send for his washerwoman," said he, laughing.

"Give us a rest on that, Tommy," said Frank, turning away.

The reader will remember the trick that Tommy played upon Frank with a washerwoman.

"Oh, sorra, sorra; there'll be no more tricks an' fun now," replied Dennis.

Now to show what a blarney Dennis was, he had already played a trick on Tommy as a sort of parting blessing, but this is how it resulted:

Tommy had a medium-sized leather bag made to carry samples in, and had given it to Dennis to pack. His trunk had been packed with heavier samples, and shipped right through to Chicago, his future base of operations, while he intended to stop at a few intermediate stations and see what he could do with his lighter samples.

Well, Dennis thought it would be a nice joke to fill the bag with a lot of railroad spikes and let him discover them when he first opened his sample bag in the presence of a customer.

But Tommy had a curiosity to know how heavy the bag was going to be, so he lifted it while Dennis was not looking, and finding it exceedingly weighty, he dropped to the little racket right away, but said not a word.

At length everything being in readiness, Tommy shook hands with his uncle, received his last instructions, and stood ready to go.

"Dennis, I am going to walk over to the ferry, you come along and take this bag," said he, pointing to the one he had ballasted so heavy with railroad spikes.

"Yes, go along with him, Dennis," said Mr. Bounce.

"Howly Moses?" thought Dennis, "I wonder does he suspect my trick? May be not. He has his coat an' things ter carry. But be gob, he'll get enough of it afore he git's to Buf-a-low," said he, taking it up.

Tommy watched him with a merry twinkle in his eye, and then turning once more to the clerks and salesmen in the store, he shook each of them heartily by the hand, and then left the store, followed by Dennis.

Tommy had plenty of time to reach the ferry, where he was to meet Dovey, so he walked slowly, for the purpose of giving Dennis the full benefit of his own joke.

The day was very warm, and the poor fellow sweat like a bull as he tugged along toward the Jersey City ferry. He almost regretted the joke he had played on his young friend, although it was then too late to mend it.

Arriving at the ferry they went on board one of the boats, Tommy concluding to cross over and to take Dennis along with him. This gave him half an hour longer to enjoy the joke.

Arriving in Jersey City, he found his friend Dovey waiting for him, and two more delighted youths never met. The whole great world was before them, and as they both had plenty of money, they resolved to enjoy all they could find.

They purchased their tickets, and then Tommy shook hands heartily with Dennis, who had placed the heavy bag before him.

A curious smile overspread the porter's features.

"Good-bye, Dennis, old man. Be good to yourself"

while I am gone, and don't work too hard," said he, in his own good-natured way.

"Faith, an' I will not. It isn't a bit like me, Tommy, as ye well know."

"That is so. But I didn't know but that you would feel that you must work harder in my absence than when I was at home."

"Divil a fear, Tommy. But it's hopin' I am that ye'll have a foine toime all the while; salots of the counthry, and make lots of money."

"I hope so. Well, good-bye. But, by the way, Dennis, none of your practical jokes while I am gone," said he, slyly.

"Och, sure, ye know I niver play jokes on onybody. Sure it's yerself that's up ter that sort of a thing, an' ye know it very well."

"Me, Dennis! I never joke."

"Murther, murther! Only hear him, an' afther those games on Frank Hoyt. Ax him if he thinks ye never play jokes."

"Well, you ask him when you return to the store."

"Ax him what?"

"If I ever play jokes."

"Och, sure he knows it as well as I do."

"Oh, you are mistaken, Dennis. You are the only joker in the store. By the way, Dennis, come back here a moment," said he, taking up his keys and unlocking his sample bag.

Dennis returned with a feeling of dread.

"Here," he said, taking the big bundle of railroad spikes out, "I guess I shan't need these, so you may take them back to the store."

Dennis was sick in an instant.

"I shan't need them," he repeated, handing the heavy bundle back to the dumbfounded joker.

Dennis attempted to speak, but could not. His foolishness took the talk all out of him. He looked first at Tommy and then at Dovey, and seeing a smile on each of their faces, he seized the heavy load and started back to the store with it.

"Don't play any tricks, Dennis," called Tommy, while both he and Dovey laughed merrily.

"Oh, go ter the devil," growled Dennis.

"Good-bye. Show them to Frank and tell him you never play tricks."

"The divil go ridin' wid ye," was the last growl they heard, and turning away laughing, they seated themselves in a car.

"Bad luck ter my stupid head," muttered Dennis. "He found out all about it afore we left the store, an' here he has made me lug the blame things away over here, an' now I've ter lug 'em back agin. Was there iver such a thick skull as moine? Sure, I think it's made of pot-meal. Tare-an-nouns! how hot it is. Musha, musha! but isn't this the divil's own job entirely? Faith, that Tommy's the divil onyhow, an' little good he'll be after doin' his uncle, I'm thinking."

Thus he muttered as he walked back to the store, and what was the worst of it, one of the clerks to whom he had told his little "joke," saw him when he entered, and put the spikes back into the bin where he had taken them from, and that being "too good to keep," the whole store soon learned of it, and it was a long time after that before poor Dennis heard the last of his little practical joke on Tommy Bounce.

The trains moved slowly out of the depot, and soon Jersey City began to fade away behind them.

They were fairly launched now, and what was in store for them they knew as little about as they cared.

"How is this, old man?" asked Dovey, after they were fully under headway.

"Good enough. How will it be?"

"Good enough, some more, or?"

"Or we'll make it so," replied Tommy, and the friends shook hands gleefully over their start.

CHAPTER VI.

TOMMY BOUNCE and his friend George Dovey were spinning along the road towards—where?

They didn't care a continental.

They only knew that they were out on the road, with the world before them and dull care behind them.

And two happier fellows never lived.

The cars were almost flying, for it was an express train stopping only at larger places on the Erie road.

The country through which they were flying was beautiful. Hill, dale, mountains, rivers, and streams greeted the sight on every side and made them almost wild with delight.

The first regular stop was at Port Jervis, a beautiful place, where hundreds of the readers of THE BOYS' LIBRARY reside.

Tommy and his friend got out on the platform of the depot to stretch their legs a bit and improve the five minutes' stoppage by looking around.

There was a crowd of people there of course, as there generally is at railway stations when a train arrives or departs, but in this case there were a large number of country folks there who had driven into town with their old nags and awkward wagons to see the "keers," or bring in some member of the family who was going on a journey.

A couple of these people instantly attracted the attention of our travelers. A man and his wife, middle-aged, and evidently from some interior farming district, stood tremblingly on the platform awaiting the final stopping of the train.

A few rods away, two of their stalwart sons, one on either side, stood grasping the bridle of an old horse, evidently expecting to see him fly away in terror at the sight of the cars, although the poor beast scarcely noticed them, and looked as though it would take a good dose of the gad to worry him into a trot.

The engine began taking in water, and to blow off steam, the noise of which almost frightened the cold woman out of her senses.

"Oh, lordy massy, Ephrim, she's bust!" she exclaimed, grabbing him by the arm and drawing him further away.

"Whoa, Whoa, Nancy!" yelled the husband, evidently thinking more about the horse than his wife. "Hold her tight, boys," he called.

Tommy, who was enjoying the fun, thought he would have a little more, so he took a pistol from his pocket and discharged one barrel of it into the air above his head, causing both the old man and woman to leap up and nearly tumble to pieces.

"Oh, Lord!" he groaned.

"There he goes!" moaned the old woman. "I knew something would happen, Ephrim, I knew it! Oh, dear, why didn't we stay at home?"

By this time quite a crowd had gathered, and Tommy and Dovey withdrew and returned to their seats in the car.

"All aboard!" shouted the conductor.

All a bust! I—knew it!" moaned the old man, glaring wildly around.

Just then the bell began to ring.

"Oh, dear! What's that, for pity's sake?"

"All aboard!"

Then the whistle sounded.

"Gracious, gracious!"

"Come, come! Get aboard if you are going!" yelled the station-agent, approaching them.

"What! Didn't everything bust!" she asked, turning mournfully to him.

A cloud of smoke and steam went floating down around the people who stood on the platform, and this added to the confusion of the old couple.

"No, no, there's nothing bust, unless it is your brains. Come, get aboard, or you'll be left behind!"

"Come, Samanthee!" said the old man, plucking up courage and taking his wife by the hand. "What is the use of being afraid?"

"Oh, Lord, but I am, though. I think it's awful risky bizness, Ephrim," said she, holding back.

"Go ahead, shove along, you won't get hurt," said the agent, pushing them towards the car steps.

They had barely time to get upon the platform when the train started with a jerk, which nearly upset and frightened away what little sense they had left. But with the assistance of a brakeman they were pushed into the car where Tommy and Dovey sat, and, as luck would have it, seated just in front of them.

This was undoubtedly the first time in their lives that either of them had ever seen or been upon a train of cars, and a more thoroughly-frightened couple were never encountered.

They sat tremblingly down and gazed anxiously around them. The passengers were all laughing at them, but they did not appear to notice it. They grasped each other's hands and seemed to be bracing up for the dread moment when a smash-up should come.

Tommy and his chum were convulsed with laughter, and made up their minds to have some fun with the timid couple.

Presently the conductor came in for their tickets. They both looked at him in mute surprise.

"Tickets," said he, a second time.

"Who?" asked the old man.

"Give me your tickets, if you please."

"Oh yes. Be you the man that takes 'em?"

"I am."

"Wal, I didn't know. You see this is the first time in our lives that we were on the keers, an' we didn't 'zactly know," and the old man made a dive to get at his pocket.

"Don't let go on me, Ephrim," whispered his wife.

"But, gosh darn it, I've got ter git at my tickets, ain't I. Set up, what yer 'fraid on?"

"Oh, Ephrim! how careless you are," said she, as he pushed her into an upright position on the seat.

"There they be, mister. They take us to Binghampton, don't they?" he asked, producing the tickets.

"Yes," said the conductor, punching them and hurrying along.

They both looked at the tickets as the conductor handed them back. At first they were unable to understand why he had returned them.

"Ephrim, that war a pistol that he had in his hand," said she, referring to the conductor's punch.

"No it wan't no pistol, either. Guess I know what a pistol is, good 'nough."

"Yes, it war. Look, he's shot a hole clean through 'em both," and to sustain her assertion that the conductor had a pistol, she pointed to the holes in the tickets made by the punch.

"Gracious, Samanthee, don't say nothin' 'bout pistols; only see how fast we are goin'!"

They both looked out of the window.

"Oh, my, Ephrim, supposin'—"

"Yes, that's so, Samanthee. Oh, oh! what awful reckless folks there are in this world."

"Dear me, I wish we had gone with the wagon a' old mare," she whined.

"Jewhittier!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, Ephrim, don't swear. Only think."

"Lordy, lordy, how they do go!"

"An' how they shake an' squirm around. If we ever live through it, it'll be a finger o' Providence."

"Yes, Samanthee."

Just then the conductor returned from going through the car.

"Say, you, mister, are we almost thar?" said the old man, plucking him by the coat.

"Almost where?"

"Tu Binghampton."

"Nonsense, you have ridden only three or four miles yet."

"Lordy; I thought we was goin' like lightning."

"Oh, no."

"Wal, don't take us past Binghampton will yer. Yer see mister, wer'e going there ter visit our darter, Jane Ann. She's married and lives in Binghampton, and we arn't never seen her since she went away."

"She's married to a man by the name of Stumps. Maybe you know him, mister," suggested the wife.

"Don't think I do," said the conductor, casting a glance at Tommy and his friend, who sat behind enjoying the sport.

"Wal, don't carry us beyond the town, will you?"

"Oh, no. You will hear the brakeman calling out the different stopping places," replied the conductor, turning away.

The fact was that it was not so much of a treat to him as it was to Tommy and the other passengers, for he came across such customers every day.

The old man turned around to watch the train officer out of sight, all the while wondering how he could keep his seat when his eyes rested on Tommy Bounce.

Tommy looked rather sympathetic and so he made bold to speak to him.

"What der yer think of this, young feller?"

"Of what?" asked Tommy, leaning forward.

"Arn't we jist kickin', though?"

"No, sir, we are traveling on the railroad."

"But arn't we goin' fast!"

"On the contrary, my dear sir, we are going so very slow that my friend and I were just talking about getting out and walking," replied Tommy, looking as honest as a clam.

"What's that, walkin'!"

"Yes: we were thinking about walking to the next station and waiting for the cars to catch up with us."

The old man turned squarely around at this, and looked at our friends in astonishment. But they both looked so honest that he was completely nonplussed, and turned back to his wife.

She asked him what the trouble was and he told her, after which she ventured to look around and remark our heroes.

"They must be durned fools, or else we be," said he, at length:

But yet he could not understand it, and soon turned to Tommy again. By this time the train had got out upon a long stretch of straight away level track, and the engineer began to give more speed to his engine, until it was whizzing along at the rate of about fifty miles an hour.

"Tarnal goodness, young chap; don't you call this ere jist goin' fast?" he asked.

"Well, sir, the driver is picking up a trifle now, I must admit. But still we are going very slow, compared to what we shall go presently."

"You don't say so!"

"Mercy sakes! Faster'n this?" asked his wife.

"Oh, yes, about ten times faster than this," replied Tommy, coolly.

"Oh, Ephrim, I know we shall be smashed all to pieces. Why didn't we go with the mare?"

The old fellow did not reply. It was evidently a conundrum that he gave up without a struggle. Presently he turned round again.

"I say, young feller, arn't there danger in goin' so drefful fast?"

"Oh, of course there is. Anybody might know that. But what do heartless corporations care if they only get our money?"

"Du you hear that, Samanthee?" he asked, turning to his wife.

She groaned in reply, and grasped the arm of her seat still firmer.

"But of course you have got your lives insured?" suggested Tommy, bent on worrying them still further.

"Lordy no. We never traveled on keers afore, an' we didn't know what to do."

"Oh, Ephrim, I knowd you'd forget something."

"Well, everybody now-a-days traveling on the cars takes out an accident policy, so if the train goes to smash with them their friends will have something to remember them by."

"Great gosh!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, Ephrim, why didn't we go with the old mare?" again put in his wife. "Oh!"

The car gave a lurch just then, and she grabbed him around the neck.

"Lemme me be, Samanthee," he gasped.

"Oh, I'm sure we shall run off."

"Place up here where the train runs off the bridge every day regular," suggested Tommy as an additional consolation.

"Gracious! An' kill people?"

"No. It runs on the bridge at one end and off at the other," replied the young mischief-maker.

But the joke was lost on the old couple, who clung to each other even closer than ever, and seemed lost in the terrors that they supposed to be around them.

They glanced at the other passengers in the car to see if they anticipated danger, but they all appeared calm, and some of them were even so indifferent to the dangers that they were asleep.

Others were reading, laughing, or chatting with their companions as easily as though in a parlor.

What to make of such recklessness they did not know. It must be, they thought, that they all had their lives insured heavily and were tired of living anyway. At all events, the calm faces around them did not lull their fear much.

One or two more sudden jerks and swayings of the car made them cling to each other with renewed earnestness.

Tommy raised the back of the seat he was sitting in and let it fall with a loud bang.

"Mercy on us!" they both exclaimed, starting up.

"Anything broke I wonder?"

The old man looked around at Tommy.

"What was it?"

"A broken rail, I guess."

"Didn't throw us off?"

"Oh, no; we're all right yet. It isn't every broken rail that destroys a train, and we may get through all right."

The passengers in the seats around understood what was going on between the frightened people and Tommy, and they were enjoying it hugely.

"Oh, Ephrim. I'm afraid we are neglecting something dreadful," said she.

"What is it, Samantha?"

"Can't you repeat a passage of Scripture?"

"No, Samantha, I—I'm so kinder mixed up that I can't think o' nothing."

"Can't you sing a hymn?"

"I don't know, I"—

He hesitated a moment and then struck up "On Jordan's Stormy Bank I stand." The two of them joined tremblingly in the good old-fashioned tune, and struggled through it the best they could, and it appeared to afford them much relief and consolation in their agony.

Just then the train slowed up a trifle in going around a curve, and the engineer blew the whistle loud and long.

"Binghampton!" shouted Tommy, in an assured voice, as the noise of the whistle ceased.

"Gracious, Samantha!" exclaimed the old man, leaping to his feet.

"Oh, oh!"

"Here we are, Samantha! Get ready or we shan't have time to get off," he said, grabbing at their different bags and bundles.

"Hold on, Ephrim; don't go an' leave me."

"Come along," said he, with hands full of baggage, as he rushed towards the car-door.

By this time the whole car was convulsed with laughter. But they never noticed this, so full of anxiety were they to get out before the cars started.

The old man was about to open the door, when a brakeman confronted him.

"Where are you going?" he demanded.

"Goin' to git out."

"Where?"

"Binghampton!"

"Bing—thunder!" growled the brakeman.

"No, Binghampton."

"Bah! Go sit down. You won't be at Binghampton for two hours yet."

"Great gosh! Didn't yer jist holler out Binghampton?" he asked, in astonishment.

"No, no; you are crazy. Go sit down."

"Are you sure, mister?" put in the wife.

"Oh, go shoot yourself!" growled the brakeman, turning away.

Reluctantly the fooled couple returned to their seats, but they had to interview Tommy.

"Didn't you hear somebody yell Binghampton?"

"I thought I did," replied Tommy innocently.

"I'm sure on it."

"Don't let that fellow fool you. These brakemen are impudent fellows, and just as live fool a person as not."

"By gosh; he better not try to fool me, if I am an old man; he better not by Jerusalem!"

"Don't get mad, Ephrim," said his wife, soothingly.

"Wal, Samantha, s'posin' they take us 'way on beyond Binghampton?"

The poor woman groaned at the possibility, and the old man by this time had got his Jersey up, and was looking decidedly belligerent.

"What'll I do? What's the man that bosses the train?" he asked of Tommy.

"Away at the forward end of the train, probably."

"An' how'm I going ter get at him?"

"Ring the bell for him, I suppose."

"What bell? What?"

"Do you see that cord up there?" asked Tommy, pointing up to the signal-cord that ran along the top of the car.

"Yes. What's that?"

"That is attached to his bell. Pull it."

The old fellow reached for that cord, and seizing it, he gave it a tremendous pull, while the passengers were roaring with laughter.

"If that chap has been a-foolin' me, I'll make him sweat for it," said he.

In a moment the train began to slacken up, and had come almost to a standstill before the conductor reached the car.

"What's the trouble here?" he demanded.

"We want to get off at Binghampton," yelled the indignant old man.

"Well, what if you do? Who pulled the signal-cord?"

"I did."

"What for?"

"Didn't I jist tell yer?"

"Thunder!" exclaimed the conductor, as with set teeth he pulled the cord again to signal the engineer to go ahead. "Now will you have the goodness to sit down and mind your own business," said he approaching them, angrily.

"I don't want no foolin', mister."

"Neither do I."

"No, we want to stop at Binghampton," put in his wife.

"Well, you are not within a hundred miles of it yet."

"Great Gosh! You said I'd hear the chap sing out, an' I did."

"Nonsense!"

"Mean to tell me I lie?"

"I'd have you know that my husband is a church-member, an' the father of a family; and it ain't much likely he'd lie."

The conductor glanced around and saw how well the passengers were enjoying the fun and his anger was partially smoothed over.

"He yelled Binghampton, an' I thought you war carryin' us beyond it."

"Oh, you must be mistaken."

"Why, my wife, Samantha heard him, an' so did this young man," pointing to Tommy, who was trying in vain to look sober and honest.

"You will know it sure enough when we get there for we stop fifteen minutes. So keep perfectly cool, and don't let anybody play tricks on you."

"I'd like ter see somebody play tricks on me, that's all," said the old Jerseyman, savagely.

"Well, all right; keep cool and let your hair grow," he added going from the car.

After awhile the old couple got seated again and were talking the matter over between them.

She was all the while lamenting that they had not taken the old mare and wagon to make their visit with, for then they could have inquired of any person they met regarding their route and not be in any danger of being taken past their destination.

But presently the great speed of the train again attracted their attention, and once more they began to sing "On Jordan's Stormy Banks I Stand," and as before, it appeared to make them feel better.

Finally they got calmed down enough to go for their lunch-basket, as several others were doing.

But Tommy, by reaching under the seat had been there before them, and taking a swig from their bottle of cold tea had filled it up with some first rate brandy which he had in a flask.

They ate their ginger-bread, and bread and butter with considerable relish, and every now and then each of them would take a swig from the tea bottle.

"Pears to me, Samantha, that this tea has a mighty cur'us taste," suggested the old man.

"I thought so too; but I guess it's because it's cold when we've been used to drinking it hot," said she.

"Maybe; but I don't like this ere travelin' on keers no way," and he took another swig of the tea.

Then he smacked his lips and looked thoughtful.

"What's the matter, Ephrim?"

"This ere tea seems ter be gittin' to my head."

"That's cos we're goin' so fast, Ephrim."

"If I didn't know better, I'd think I was a gettin' drunk."

"Law, Ephrim, how you talk! I feel the same way myself; but it's owin' ter the keers," and so they ate and drank until it was all gone.

But the brandy was having its effect on them both, as neither of them was used to drinking liquor of any kind. The effect was different, however. She was inclined to sing Psalm tunes in a very shrill key, and he wanted to hit somebody.

"Stop yer singin', Samantha; who's afraid of bein' smashed up? I aren't."

"Why, Ephrim, how you talk!"

"Shut up! Just as live the durned old keers would go to smash as not," he said, waving his long arms around. "My name's Ephrim Stute, and I'm a wild hoss, I am!" he exclaimed.

"Why Ephrim, what on airth is the matter with you?" she said, trying to hush him up.

"I want ter find the chap as yelled Binghampton, and made a fool of me; that's what's the matter with me, by thunder and lightnin'!"

"Oh, Ephrim, you are goin' crazy. I know you are. Do be good. What will folks think?"

"I don't care a continental. Show me the man?"

"Oh, Ephrim, we shall be smashed up if you keep on this way. I never knew you to do so before. It's the ridin' in the keers as is a-doin' it, I know."

It was with much difficulty that she managed to pacify him and keep him from going for that brakeman; but she succeeded in doing so at last, and he soon after went to sleep, greatly to the regret of the passengers, who had enjoyed so much sport at the old fellow's expense.

What had made him carry on so they did not know, until a man, who sat opposite to Tommy and saw him put the brandy in the tea, told one or two others, and set the joke going through the cars.

When they arrived at Binghampton it was night, and both being tired out, they were glad enough to get on the solid earth once more. Tommy shook hands with them both and congratulated them on their escape, which the old lady attributed to singing "On Jordan's Stormy Banks I stand," and they parted company.

While getting supper at Binghampton, sleeping-cars were attached to the train, and entirely a new state of affairs arranged for the comfort of the passengers.

Thus far they had gone on their journey. What lay on before them?

We shall see.

CHAPTER VII.

We left our friends, Tommy Bounce and George Dovey, at supper at Binghampton, where they parted with the old couple, with whom they had enjoyed so much fun, and as sleeping-cars had been taken on for the accommodation of those who wished such luxuries, they left the refreshment room and entered the one assigned them.

In a few moments the whole car was occupied, and away they went out into the country in continuing their journey.

On looking around, he saw that the majority of the passengers were the same ones from New York with them, although there was probably half a dozen new faces there.

"Well, Dovey, I'm afraid we shall have to go hungry for fun during the remainder of our trip," said Tommy, after he had looked around.

"Why so?"

"I don't see anything that looks like fun in this car, do you?"

"Well, no, unless it is the old lady on the other side," replied Dovey, glancing at a middle-aged maiden sitting opposite.

Tommy looked up to see what he could make of her. She was a sharp-featured woman, showy in her dress, and evidently vinegary in her temper.

In her lap she carried a small cage, in which were half-a-dozen white mice, upon whom she evidently lavished the overflow of her heart, as she seemed to be very careful of them, and paid no attention to anything else.

Tommy's eyes sparkled as he saw them.

"What do you think?" asked Dovey.

"I guess there's fun there," he replied, quietly.

In a few moments their attention was attracted by a couple in the seat ahead of them. They were evidently a newly-married couple, and most likely on a wedding trip to Niagara Falls.

But how green and bashful they were. She was blushing like a June rose, and he appeared to feel so ashamed that he dared not look into the faces of his fellow passengers. In fact they acted as if they had been doing something wrong, and scarcely dared to look in each other's faces, even.

"So, so. What have we here?" asked Dovey.

"Something very soft and loving at all events. See how bashfully he looks at her," said Tommy.

"Fresh from the hymenial altar, I'll bet."

"Fresh from it and fresh before it, I guess. But we are not so badly fixed as I feared we were. If we can't get fun out of the old gal with the white mice, we may possibly get some out of these two white mice here. Let's go into the smoking-car for a while and see what's there," said he, getting up.

"Got any cigars?"

"Oh, yes. Come along."

"All right, go ahead. Our section is safe," and away they started for the forward end of the train, where twenty or thirty passengers were enjoying cigars after their lately bolted meal.

They took a vacant seat behind an Irishman. He was well dressed, but appeared to be laboring under some mental trouble. Each lighted a cigar and were soon puffing away like the rest, and after the example of the engine that was rattling them over the road at such a rate.

The troubled Irishman looked at the youths, and seeing them smoking, it seemed to add to his trouble somehow. Then he glanced around at the other smokers and finally turning to Tommy, he said:

"Is it agin the rules ter smoke pipes here?"

"That depends altogether upon what kind of a pipe it is," said Tommy, in reply.

"Sure, an' it's a duden."

"A what?"

"There it is," he said, holding it up.

It was all loaded, ready for a good square smoke; but seeing the other passengers only smoking cigars, he was not sure that smoking pipes was allowable, and this was what had been preying upon his mind.

"Are you a naturalized citizen of the United States?" asked Tommy, with much gravity.

"Sure, I am that—I'm a voter."

"All right; you can smoke a pipe. Foreigners are only forbidden such luxuries."

"Is that so?" asked the gladdened Irishman.

"Yes, indeed."

"I'm obliged ter ye, young man. Wud ye be after lendin' me the loan of a match?"

"A match? Oh, certainly," replied Tommy, taking a box of the patent safety matches from his pocket and handing him one.

These matches can only be lighted by scraping them on the box in which they are kept, it being covered with a chemical preparation which assists in igniting the point, and you may rub all day on anything else and they will not take fire.

"Good for ye, me lad; ye've civility about ye anyway," said he, taking the match and giving it a lusty rub along the seat of his trousers. "An', be me sowl that's more nor iverybody's got."

He rubbed the match vigorously up and down his trousers, but, of course, it did not ignite. Then he turned up the sole of his boot and rubbed away on that for a while, after which he tried it on the floor with no better success. But he kept on scratching until the match was all worn off on the end.

"Bad luck ter me, but there isn't a pinch of the devil's fire in it at all."

"What! Can't make it go?"

"Faith I can't. I think it's a bad one," said he, throwing it away.

"Never knew one of those matches to miss fire before in my life. See here," said he, taking another from the box and striking it on it.

Of course it ignited instantly.

"See," he added, holding it up and then throwing it away. "The matches are all right. You don't understand lighting matches, I guess."

"Begorra, young man, I've lighted thousands of them before you war born."

"I beg to differ with you, sir."

"Differ wid me! Der ye mane to say I lie!" he asked somewhat sharply.

"Oh, no. I merely differ with you; that's all."

"All right. My name's Roger O'Malley; an' I'm a dacint man; an' ye'll foind no nonsense about me."

"I never suspected that there was."

"An' ye'd better not. I can tell ye that," said he, waxing wroth.

"But why don't you smoke?" asked Dovey.

"Faith, I war nearly forgettin' it. Give me the kind of another match, will ye?"

"Oh, certainly," said Tommy, handing him another.

"An' der ye know fut I'd do, young man?"

"Light it, I suppose."

"Maybe ye think I'm a granehorn."

"Oh, no."

"I'll lay ye a wager I light this the first try."

"Perhaps so."

"I'll lay ye a wager that I do."

"How much?" asked Dovey.

"Fifty cints?"

"All right. I'll take that bet just for fun."

"Here ye are, young man. I'll give ye fifty cents' worth of fun at all events," said he, placing a fifty cent stamp on top of Dovey's.

"Ther fust toime, is it?"

"The first time. Go ahead."

"I'm a granehorn, am I?" he asked, canding himself over on one side, and drawing his pantaloons tight

over his thigh. "I'm a granehorn!" and he looked sharply at both of the young fellows.

"Go ahead," said Tommy.

Mr. O'Malley did go ahead, by giving the match a vigorous rub on his pantaloons, where he had ignited hundreds of matches, but he failed to light this one. But a more puzzled-looking man never was seen.

"An! I have won," said Dovey.

Mr. O'Malley made no reply, but he frowned at the business end of that match as though he would have swallowed it.

"You have lost your money, sir," said Tommy.

"Bad luck ter the money. But I have the match, an', begorra, I'll loight it or lave myself a corpse on the flure," said he, and he proceeded to rub that innocent match on the leg of his trousers until he nearly wore a hole through them. But nary a light.

"Bad luck!" he exclaimed out of patience and about to throw it away.

"Stop! I'll bet you a dollar that I can light that match the first time," said Tommy.

"Out, you spalpeen! Wud ye make one out a fool intirely? Sure don't I know there's no good at all in the darn thing."

"Well, I'll bet you a dollar that I'll light it the first time, and that will enable you to get your money back and more if I do not do it."

"Faith, I'll do it. It'll serve ye right for supposin' I were a granehorn," said the victim, taking a dollar from his pocket.

"Now let me see the match."

"There it is."

Tommy took his box, and rubbing it upon it gently, lighted it the first stroke. Mr. O'Malley's eyes stuck out further than before.

"See!" said Tommy, holding up the blaze to his victim. "Where's your pipe?"

Without a word he took the burning stick and proceeded to light his pipe with it, while Tommy quietly pocketed the dollar he had won.

"Sure, there's witchcraft in it," said O'Malley, settling down to enjoy the smoke he had so much trouble in getting.

"Oh, no. Nothing at all when you know how it is done," replied Tommy, getting up to leave.

"What's that?" said O'Malley, turning around suddenly.

But they had gone and he was left to his pipe and reflections. How to account for it he did not know, but it furnished him with food for thought for a long time.

As for Tommy and Dovey, after finishing their cigars and fun with their victim, they returned to their seats in the sleeping-car.

It was dark now, and the lamps were lighted. Some of the passengers were asleep, some reading, and others doing nothing.

The maiden with her white mice still sat there tending them, and the newly-married couple had got a trifle more used to the situation, and were conversing quite pleasantly.

The lights within and the darkness without reminded them of their courting days. His arm had stolen around her waist, and she was leaning her head on his shoulder, when every now and then she would roll her eyes up at his and look sheepish enough to have wool instead of hair.

Of course Tommy and his friend could do nothing but listen, while they waited for something else to turn up.

"Oh, George, do you think anybody in the car knows it?" she asked, tenderly.

"Knows what, 'Mandy?"

"That we are just married."

"No, I guess not. But I don't care if they do," said she, sampling her lips.

"Oh, George!"

"Taint anything new for folks to get married."

"Oh, but to have anybody know it. It makes me feel awful, George."

"Yes, and me too, 'Mandy. But I don't care, durned if I do. It's nobody's business," and again he went to see if her lips tasted just the same as ever.

Just then the porter of the car began to hang up the curtains, to set up the partitions, and to make up the sleeping-berths.

"Oh, George, what are they doing?" she asked, as she caught sight of what was going on.

"George" looked around to see.

"Why, 'Mandy, they're making up 'he beds!"

"Oh, oh, George!" and she blushed deeper than ever.

"Don't mind 'em, 'Mandy," he said, soothingly.

"Will they make up a bed here, where we sit?"

"Yes, 'Mandy."

"Two?"

"No, only one for two."

"Oh, George, don't let him do it. How it does make me feel," and she hid her face on his shoulder.

As for "George," he appeared to be as much confused as his wife was. He watched the colored porter, as with skillful hand he built up tier after tier of berths, and the passengers disappeared from sight.

Finally he reached the seat where they sat.

"Oh, George, don't let him!" said she.

"Haf ter sturb yer a few minits, boss," said he, couching the bridegroom on the shoulder. "Want ter make up dese yer bunks."

"But I say, can't you leave this one just as it is?" asked George.

"No, sah. Got ter make 'em all up, one arter another. Jes step out inter de passageway."

"Oh, George, what is he going to do?" she asked, clinging to him as he started to obey the porter's injunctions.

"Make up our bed."

"Oh, oh! what shall I do!"

The puzzled bridegroom placed his arm around her waist, and drew her gently after him out into the

passageway, while the porter proceeded to build up the compartment into a nice little room.

"Oh, George," was all she could say.

"Never mind it, 'Mandy," he whispered.

"But what will people say?"

George sighed, and said he didn't know.

"Dar you are, sah, all ready for retiring," said the porter, as he finished.

"I know I shall faint, George."

"Don't 'Mandy," and he led her in behind the curtain which hung before the bunks.

"What shall we do?"

"I don't know, 'Mandy, I'm sure."

"Can't folks see us?"

"I guess not."

"Well, don't let's undress, anyhow."

"All right, 'Mandy; just as you say."

Presently she spoke again.

"Supposing something should happen, George?"

"Oh, 'Mandy, don't get nervous," and again there was a widespread consultation regarding going to bed; somebody's looking, or the possibility of some accident happening.

In the meantime Tommy Bounce and Dovey had not been idle. Tommy had been watching the old maid and her white mice, and through an opening in the curtains he saw that she placed the cage near her head, and on the outer edge of her berth.

He kept his eye on that cage for a long time, and about midnight the vigorous music that came from her bunk would have convinced a deaf man that the mistress of the mice was asleep.

"If I could only get that cage open and let those mice out in the car, you'd see some sport," he whispered to Dovey.

Parting the curtains, he looked out and glanced up and down the curtained aisle to see if the coast was clear. The porter was dozing at the forward end of the car, and he was the only person visible.

Stealing out cautiously, he pulled aside the curtain before the bunk of the snoring maiden, and gently raised the slide of the cage where the mice were all stirring about, either because of their owner's snore, or the rattle and motion of the car.

At all events, they were not long in finding out what had happened to their cage, and as Tommy stole back to his bunk they began to creep out and survey the situation.

White mice are quite as lively and inquisitive as ordinary ones, and one of them, more brave than the rest, proceeded cautiously to investigate the source of all the noise that his mistress was making. On doing this he, of course, tickled her nose, and she awoke with a scream.

In an instant she comprehended what had happened, and she screamed three or four times like a healthy Guinea hen, frightening the mice half out of their wits and bringing every passenger of the car to a bolt-up-right position.

"Oh, George!" came from the bunk of the newly-married couple, while the porter seized his lantern and rushed hurriedly to the section from whence the screams were coming.

"What's de matter?" he asked, thrusting aside the curtains and looking in.

"What's the matter?" shouted everybody.

"Oh, George! something has happened!"

But the appearance of the porter only made matters worse, for, seeing a man break in upon the privacy of her sleeping-room, frightened her out of her wits, if she had any left, and made her yell louder than ever, while everybody leaped out of bed, thinking that somebody was being murdered.

"Go away! go away!" she yelled, hugging the bed-clothing around her.

"What am de matter?"

"Go away, quick! Oh! oh! oh! there's one of them now!" she screamed.

"One of what?" asked the porter.

"Oh, she's got the jimjams," said somebody.

"Throw her out!" cried another from the lower end of the car.

"There he goes! Oh! oh! oh! There he is! I feel him now!" she howled again, flapping and turning around in her bed.

By this time a dozen men and women had gathered around to see what the trouble was.

"Oh, George!" could be heard every few seconds, but "George" wasn't there to get up to see what had happened.

"What is the trouble?" asked several, as the old maid squealed and kicked again.

"Are you sick?" asked a lady.

"No, no," and again she screamed.

"What is it, then?"

"My six white mice have escaped," said she, pointing to the empty cage.

Then there was a chorus of screams, and such scampering as was never seen before, it being a well-known fact that a woman is frightened more at a mouse than she is at a tiger.

The scene was comical in the extreme, as those lady passengers made a dive for their beds again, running against one another, against half-dressed men, and making all kinds of mistakes in their hurry by getting into wrong bunks and playing the mischief generally.

"Oh, Georgie, what is it?"

Tommy and Dovey were peeping out through their curtains and enjoying the fun hugely.

In less than four shakes of a goat's tail there was not a lady passenger in sight, and the men were not slow in getting out of the way either, yet during all the time the old maid was yelling and calling for her lost mice, and imploring the passengers not to harm them if they found them in their bunks.

This produced another general squeal. The bare idea of a mouse getting into their beds was enough to make everybody have the magsams, and there was no show for any more sleep that night.

"Oh, my little darling mouses!" she moaned.

"Dry up!" yelled three or four of the indignant male passengers, but, like Rachael of old, she mourned for her children and refused to be comforted.

"I hope there's no horrid cat in the car," she moaned.

"I wish there was a dozen," growled an old fellow in the next section.

"Oh! ah!" screamed another lady at the other end of the car.

"What is it?"

"I'm sure I felt one of those dreadful mice nibbling at my toe."

"Oh! oh!" general chorus.

"Don't harm the dear creatures," called out the owner, pathetically.

"Oh, George!"

"Ah! I feel one," cried another female voice in the next bunk, at which the women started a general howl, and the men joined in with oaths and curse words.

The porter went for the conductor, and he tried to settle matters down. But he didn't have very good success, for every now and then until daylight the next morning, the quiet would be broken by some fidgety woman screaming out because she fancied that she felt a mouse around her.

The fact was, Tommy Bounce had succeeded in raising the very devil in that car, and could the indignant passengers have known the truth of the matter I don't know but they would have lynched him, to say nothing of what the owner of the mice would have done had she known all about it.

Well, the next morning found a cross-looking and cross-acting lot of passengers, and the frowns and uncomplimentary remarks that were made for the benefit of that sorrowing old maid would have started a balky horse.

But she couldn't find her mice and went with tears in her eyes around from one to another to know if they had seen either of her little darlings.

As for Tommy and Dovey, they had laughed over the affair until they were sore, and had to look solemn in spite of themselves.

But here they were at Niagara Falls, and they hurried their dressing to go out and see the great sights at this renowned place, feeling that they had fun enough for awhile.

From the cars they were driven to one of the hotels, where they breakfasted, and then started out to see the wonderful Falls of Niagara, the largest and most sublime of any in the world.

But we will wait until our next chapter before giving Tommy's adventures at this place, for it was quite as lively as any we have yet seen him in.

CHAPTER VIII.

I TAKE for granted that every reader of the *BOYS' LIBRARY* has either seen Niagara Falls, read about them, or seen pictures that attempted to represent them. But pictures or descriptions fail to do them justice, as every one knows who have visited them.

Neither Tommy Bounce or his friend and traveling companion, George Dovey, had ever seen them, although they had read much regarding the wonders, and were quite anxious to gaze upon them.

I will be quite well understood by this time by the readers who have followed my hero since his first appearance in the dog-cart, where the dog ran down and captured a rabbit, and killed him and his sister around so lively, that he always found fun wherever he was, and although he had a quick eye for the grand and beautiful in nature and art, yet there was always a comical side that he was sure to find out.

Going from the hotel, they started towards the Falls, the roar of which increased as they drew near; a roar so deep, so thunderingly grand that man, beast, or bird seemed awed into silence as they approached.

Going into Prospect Park, they obtained the finest view to be had on the American shore—Canada being on the opposite side of the river and Falls, claiming one-half of them, and, in many respects, the finest view of them.

Think of a mighty river tearing and tumbling down a mile or two of rugged declivity, forming the "Rapids," and then, with the speed of an arrow and force irresistible, plunging over a table of rock one hundred and sixty feet, into a foamy and seething abyss below. And these falls are altogether about half a mile wide, being broken only at Goat Island.

Like everyone else who gazes on this sublime sight for the first time, Tommy and Dovey stood silent and awe-struck, for the truth is, the Falls are so vastly superior to anything that has ever been painted or lithographed of them, that a person is made to feel about the size of a grasshopper in their presence.

For a long time they both gazed in silence.

They had nothing to say; they were lost in wonder and amazement as they stood there in the presence of the greatest natural wonder on the face of the globe.

"How is that for high?" asked Tommy, at length.

"That wins," replied Dovey, while his two eyes stuck out like hard-boiled eggs.

"It would be easier swimming down than up, don't you think so?"

"Well, just a trifle easier, although I think I would about as soon attempt one as the other."

Buying a guide book, they soon made themselves acquainted with the principal features of the place, and spent several hours here and at Goat Island, one of the most beautiful places in the world. It is only a small island standing in the rapids, and parting both them and the falls, and is covered with a beautiful forest of trees and shrubbery.

On Luna Island (a little island for a cent, as they said) one can approach the very brink of the falls, and gaze down the dizzy height to where the plunging waters thunder, hiss, and foam themselves into snowy whiteness. This little islet is connected to Goat Island

by a bridge, as Goat Island is also connected by a suspension bridge, spanning the awful rapids, to the mainland.

They visited the western extreme of the island, where they had a fine view of the Horse Shoe Falls, which is really the grandest and most beautiful of the lot, after which they procured waterproof suits and a guide, and descended a long spiral stairway which led to the Cave of the Winds.

This is really the space behind the Falls; the rock over which they plunge being nearly perpendicular, and as the water shoots over from a plumb line, it leaves a space between it and the rock into which visitors possessing nerve enough can go, although there is such a spray flying that one gets as wet as he would in a regular shower.

"Gracious!" exclaimed Dovey, "this is enough to make a fellow think of his sins."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Tommy. "I should think you would be kept pretty busy."

The guide laughed and suggested that it was better than going to church.

"Well, let's go out," said Dovey, for in spite of himself the surroundings were a trifle more than his nerves could stand.

"Ah! I always knew you had a very bad conscience," said Tommy, laughing again. "But, I say, Dovey, how I would like to have old Pike, our old janitor at Andover, here."

"Yes, or old Pray."

Again they laughed heartily and followed the guide out from under the Falls, and once more reached the little bridge that spans along from rock to rock below, and over which they had come from the stairway.

While here they stopped and looked up at the tumbling torrents so far above them. Lake Erie was emptying itself madly at their feet!

Back again and in their own clothes, they went once more to Luna Island. There were several visitors there, and now that Tommy had seen all there was to see from the American side, he began to observe who were "taking it in."

And they all had different styles of doing it.

Some were holding their mouths and eyes open to take it in; some were gazing in mute admiration, while others were gabbling about various points of interest and volunteering all sorts of information and not unfrequently to the disgust of those about them.

One foppish sort of a fellow was talking loudly about various things connected with the Falls, trying to make those around him believe that he was perfectly familiar with everything in and around the neighborhood, although according to Tommy's guide book, he was either making up much of his information, or the fellow who wrote the guide book was an ignoramus and didn't know what he was about.

This was "nuts" for Tommy, and he resolved to have some fun with the loud-mouthed cheat, at the same time making up his mind that he had never been there before in his life. So watching his opportunity he approached him.

"I say, my friend, which is Niagara Falls, and which the Horseshoe Falls?"

"Sir?" said the chap, rather sharply.

"I beg pardon. But I see you are acquainted here, and being a total stranger myself, I ask for information."

"Oh, that's all right. These are Niagara Falls and the Horseshoe is over yonder."

"Thank you," said Tommy, while a smile on the faces of several who stood around, showed that they appreciated the joke.

"And where is the Cave of the Winds?" he asked, with all innocence.

"It is a cave in the middle of Goat Island."

"Oh, it is, eh? Have you been in it?"

"Yes, often."

"And is this Goat Island?"

They were standing on Luna Island, it will be remembered.

"Yes, this is Goat Island."

"Where we are now?"

"Yes, right here," replied the chap, who just then manifested some uneasiness.

"Then what a liar the guide is, and the person who wrote this book," said Tommy.

"Why so?"

"Because, he says this is Luna Island, and the chap who took us down over that bridge path a few moments ago, actually had the cheek to say that the Cave of the Winds is under the Falls where he conducted us."

Tommy looked the cheeky impostor full in the face, with a half-comical, half-injured expression, and several persons who had been listening to the conversation laughed loudly.

That chap turned white and looked sick.

"The guide was right, and so is your guide-book, young man, and this fellow is an ass," said an old gentleman who knew all about the place, and had seen through the bombastic talk of the youth.

Another laugh failed to make him feel any better, and he was about to move away when Tommy spoke to the brusque old fellow.

"Sir, you must be mistaken. I have often heard that there was a great deal of humbugging here at Niagara Falls, and as this gentleman is wholly disinterested, it stands to reason that he should be more truthful than the money-making guides."

"Oh, bah!" said the old fellow, impatiently.

He was about to turn away in disgust, but being evidently mad he expressed himself.

"I tell you, sir, he's an ass, and can't even see that you are quizzing him. Bosh!" and he whirled around and walked impatiently away to another point of observation.

"Sir, I think his ribs is crazy," said Tommy, pointing to the old fellow. "I have the utmost confidence in your information, and I do not doubt but that the ladies and gentlemen standing around us have also."

Gentlemen, I propose a vote of confidence in the gentleman who has so kindly given us so much information," said he, turning to those who stood about.

But that crestfallen young guide-post didn't wait to be honored. He saw that he had made a donkey of himself in attempting to show off in the presence of some ladies, and without loss of time he proceeded to lose himself in the woods of Goat Island, while a laugh that was heard above the roar of the falls greeted his ears as he went.

Laughing as they walked along, they went around Goat Island, visiting the Sister Islands, a romantic group of three little clothed islets on the northwest of Goat Island, and standing close together in the angry rapids. They are well worth visiting, each being linked to the other by a suspension bridge, and presenting probably the finest view of the Rapids to be found anywhere.

After enjoying the sights for awhile, they were returning when they met an old man and his wife, evidently from the interior. They were apparently hesitating about going over the suspension bridge which spanned to the first little island.

"I say, young chap, will they hold?" called the man, as our friends approached them.

"Hold! hold what, water?" asked Tommy.

"No, dang it, of course I don't mean that."

"Well, what do you mean? Will it hold your horse? Is that what you ask me?"

"No, gosh dang it, will they hold ye up?" said he, somewhat impatiently.

"Oh, you ask if the bridge will support your weight?" said Tommy, honestly.

"Yes, that's what he means," said his wife.

"I understand. Well, that depends upon how much you weigh. The bridge will possibly sustain a weight of three hundred pounds."

"Gosh! Why, I weigh two hundred myself, an' I guess the old gal weighs about a hundred an' fifty."

"Ah, that will never do. You must go over, one at a time."

"Oh, my!" moaned the wife.

"All right; one at a time it is—then, long's we don't have ter chop up any finer'n that. Much 'bliged, young man. Come, Hannah," he said, turning to his wife.

"And you must walk very carefully over, for the motion you give to the suspended bridge makes it very dangerous and is liable to throw it into the rapids, good-day," and he and Dovey turned away and secreted themselves behind a clump of bushes to watch the old couple.

"You go first, Hannah," said he.

"No, you, Hiram; you're heaviest."

"Yes, an' I might burst the darn thing, you go over, and I'll foller you."

"No, don't let's go anyway."

"Yes, by gosh all henflock, I'm goin' tu have my money's worth an' see every darn thing there is in the Niagry, durned if I don't. Now go ahead Hannah."

"Well, you steady it while I walk," said she.

"Yes; go ahead."

He seized one of the cables and bracing himself with all his might he did his best to "steady" the bridge while she crept carefully across it on tiptoe. It was a laughable sight to see, as the bridge is fully capable of supporting one hundred tons weight.

"There! Now you come, Hiram," said the wife triumphantly.

"Yes, I-I'll come, Hannah. Steady it."

She seized the massive cable on the other side and began to "steady" it, while her husband crept across as though walking on eggs.

Tommy and Dovey could scarcely help yelling out their suppressed laughter as they saw the old fellow creeping along.

When about half way over a party of half a dozen gentlemen and ladies came along behind him and marched upon the bridge.

"Oh, oh! keep back there!" shouted Hannah.

"Hold on! You'll break the cussed thing down! Go back!" yelled Hiram, gesticulating wildly with his arms.

"What the devil is the matter with that old fellow?" asked one of the party as they halted.

"Drunk, I guess," suggested another.

"Hold on! hold on! The bridge won't hold more'n one at a time!"

"The man's crazy," said a third one, and they all started upon the bridge, while Hiram scrambled along with his hair standing on end.

His wife caught him in her arms as though she had snatched him from a watery gulf beneath, and they stood in open-eyed wonder and alarm, watching the approaching party, expecting to see the bridge go down with them.

"What's the matter with you, old man?" asked one of them, as they reached him.

"Gosh, all turnip-sauce! What an escape!" said he.

"Escape? What do you mean?"

"Why, the darned thing'll only hold up three hundred pounds, and it's a wonder alive that you hadn't broke it."

"We came over one at a time," said his wife, whereat the party laughed heartily.

Tommy and Dovey were enjoying it all, you bet.

"Why, man, you are crazy."

"No; two young men just told us so, and they warned us to be careful," said Hannah.

"Then they were only fooling you. Why, each one of these bridges will support more people than could crowd upon them."

A merry laugh followed, and the old couple looked at each other as though mystified.

"They were only trying to frighten you, that's all," said a lady, as the party resumed its way.

The old man didn't make any reply, but the way he

set his teeth and clenched his cane convinced Tommy that he was safer where he was than he would be in reach of it.

"Hannah, we're a pair of fools," said he.

"You did it yourself, Hiram. You'd no business to ask 'em anything about it," said she.

"Wal, gosh all brimstone, how's a man that's a stranger tu know if he don't ask?" he asked, indignantly.

"Don't swear, Hiram."

"Great smoke! If I could only lay hands on that young fraud for about five minits, I'll bet his own mammy wouldn't know him," said he, spitting on his hand and grasping his cane.

"Oh, never mind Hiram. Come along and let us see the sights. Come," said she, tugging at his arm as he stood gazing in the direction the boys had taken.

"Great nail kegs! How I du itch ter get a hold on them chaps. The idea of fooling me an' makin' me crawl over the darn bridge like a sick hen."

"Go carefully, old man," shouted Tommy, as the old fellow turned to go away.

In an instant he turned back, and would have made a break for the young mischiefs had not his wife caught hold of him.

"Lemme go. Lemme blister that young cuss!" he yelled, but she was stony, and retaining her hold as length managed to get him started the way they were going.

Tommy and Dovey watched them out of sight, and then came from their concealment, and started back to the mainland.

Their next visit was to the great suspension bridge that spans the angry river from the American to the Canadian shores.

It is about one hundred and seventy-five feet above the surface of the river, and is a mechanical curiosity, well worthy of a visit from a long distance to see.

Paying their toll, they started to walk across.

The sight was a beautiful one, for from this bridge the eye can take in the "Bridal Veil," the American and Canadian falls, and the dark green, foam-flecked waters of the river below, as well as the rapids above.

After observing the sight for a long time from their advantage ground, they crossed over and stepped upon the dominions of Queen Victoria, it being the first time that either of them had ever drawn breath under any other flag than the stars and stripes.

"Long live the Queen?" cried Dovey.

"To be sure. But I say, Dovey, I don't see as the air tastes much different here."

"Oh, you are prejudiced in favor of the United States. But let us go to the battlefield of Lundy's Lane. The air may have a different flavor there."

"All right, let's try it."

A coachman was soon engaged to take them to the falls on that side of the river, and which is really the finest view of anywhere, after which they were driven to the bloody battle field of Lundy's Lane, where General Scott won the first of his immortal honors.

"It isn't a bloody field now, is it?" asked Tommy of the driver who was taking them slowly up hill towards it.

"No, but it's a bloody hard road to get to it," replied the driver dryly.

They were both familiar with the history of that stubborn fight, but being now upon the very spot where it transpired, made their patriotic blood run quicker and their hearts swell with pride.

After listening to a detailed description of the battle, by an old man who fought in it, the boys each gave him a dollar, and thanking him earnestly for his attention to them, they resumed their hats (which they had removed out of respect to the old hero and the place where they stood,) and were driven back again to the bridge, where they soon crossed, and again stood on the soil of their native land.

Up to now their admiration and patriotism had kept their mischief down, but it had been a long time since they had enjoyed a laugh, and Tommy began to look about in search of fun.

They walked through a long line of live Indians who were industriously peddling their curiosities to visitors, and found themselves once more in Prospect Park.

Being tired they sat down there to rest on one of the benches where a good view of the watery glories was to be had. They talked over the events of the day and commented upon the grandeur before them.

While thus occupied a stalwart Indian peddler approached them.

"Ah, son of the primeval woods, we salute you," said Dovey, as he deposited his basket before them.

"Buy?" he asked.

"Alas! we need no specimen of your squaw's handiwork to remind us that your race is fast passing away, but we would like something to remind us that you have passed on."

"Buy?"

"Tell us the story of your tribe. Did your father once roam the forests around here? Did they jerk out the scaly fish from those waters and chase the beaming buffalo?"

"Buffalo eight miles above. Ough! Buy!"

"Did your fathers playfully scalp the pale-faces and drink fire-water around the camp fires that once burned along these shores?" continued Dovey.

"Yes, my father big chief, Wenawaseo. Ough! Big Injun! much fight, plenty scalps. Buy?" said the red peddler.

"And did your father once reign here?"

"Yes, all 'round. Big chief. Buy?"

"Alas! we have been among the hackmen and have escaped only with our empty purses."

By this time the red man began to take a tumble, and seeing that he was being quizzed, he took up his basket of beaded-work and Indian curiosities and pre-

pared to move where there was less chin-music and more money.

"You're no Indian," said Tommy.

The peddler sat down his basket and took a good square look at him.

"Look out Tommy, he's going for your scalp," said Dovey, laughing.

The peddler thought to make an impression, and so placing his hand over his mouth, he gave a war-whoop which attracted attention from several, and that was just what he wanted—a crowd.

"Bah an Irishman never scalps."

"A what? Isn't he an Indian?"

"No; he's only a painted Irishman," said Tommy; and they both laughed.

The peddler approached with a frown.

"Me big Injun!"

"Big Irishman, more like."

"Me kill, scalp!" said he, evidently thinking that he could frighten Tommy.

"Bah! Pull down your vest and go hang yourself. The idea of coming around here and trying to pass yourself off for an Indian—a noble red man! Why, Barney O'Whack told me who you were."

Tommy had only intended to chaff the fellow, but as luck would have it, he hit nearer to the truth than he expected to, for the peddler was in reality only an Irishman after all. But he was a mad one, you may well believe.

"Barney O'Whack's a durn liar, an' so are you, ye spalpeen!" he cried, in his anger giving himself away completely and showing his Irish.

"Oh, ho! Big Indian, hey? Tipperary Indian, I guess. Go jump over the Falls."

"Bad luck ter ye, ye spalpeen, I'd kick the stuffin' out o' ye in a minnit, so I wud," said he, sitting down his basket and making a dive for Tommy, at the same time forgetting his war whoop.

Dovey put out his foot and tripped the swarthy son of the forest and he went sprawling over on his head.

Then Tommy and Dovey sprang to their feet and lit out as fast as their legs could carry them, the Indian fraud howling and swearing in Irish, picking himself up and giving chase. But before he could overtake his tormentors a policeman captured him and turned him away about his business, while the boys walked leisurely back to the hotel, laughing at the way the Irishman got mad and gave himself away.

CHAPTER IX.

THE day following the adventure of Tommy Bounce and George Dovey at Niagara Falls, they took the cars and rode to Buffalo, whither Tommy's sample trunk of hardware specimens had been sent from New York.

It will be remembered that Tommy really started off in a "drumming" excursion for his uncle, and that his first business stopping place was to be at Buffalo.

Here they arrived and found his samples all right, and he at once set about trying his luck in a new and doubtful field of enterprise.

Dovey concluded to go about and see the city while Tommy was trying his luck, and so the two friends separated for the day.

Boys, do you know what "drumming" is? I don't mean thumping on a calashu with two sticks, but drumming as practiced by the agents of merchants in large cities.

Well, I will tell you, for "I have been there."

A merchant in New York, for instance, has a large stock of goods that he would like to sell or introduce into country towns and smaller cities, and in order to do so, they employ expert salesmen to take samples and visit these country dealers and endeavor to sell bills of goods, or get orders, which they send back to the merchants while they go on to other places.

In this way trading is largely increased, and the country merchants do not have to be at the expense of visiting New York.

But this business has increased to such an extent that the country merchants look upon these drummers from various kinds of merchants in the large cities as little better than pests, for they swarm over the country in droves, selling everything by sample, from pins to locomotives.

And these drummers are generally selected because of the brass and cheek they possess, and the faculty they have of making country merchants believe they want certain articles whether they do or not, and this is one reason why they have come to be dreaded the land over.

On this account it will be seen that the business which Tommy had chosen was far from being either new or difficult. But he was green, and knew but little about what was in store for him as a drummer.

So he selected his samples; got the locations of the principal hardware dealers in the city, and with high spirits, sallied forth to try his luck.

The first store he entered he asked for the proprietor, but had he looked anything like a drummer he would have been fired out without any explanation; but as it was, he was shown to the counting-room, where the proprietor was reading his morning paper.

Tommy entered with a confidential air, and placing his sample valise on a table he bowed.

"Mr. Tenpenny?"

"Yes, sir; what is it?" asked the merchant, looking up.

"I represent the house of Ebenezer Bounce, of New York."

"What?" asked the merchant, sharply.

"The hardware house of Ebenezer Bounce."

"Well, sir?"

"And I would like to show you some samples of—"

"What! a drummer; and so young?"

"Yes, sir."

The merchant reached for a bell-wire.

"I have some fine samples of—"

Again the merchant pulled the bell-cord.

"The man is crazy," thought Tommy.

"So young and a drummer!" said the book-keeper, whose attention had been attracted.

"As I was saying," said Tommy, turning to his samples, "I have"—

Just then two stout porters and a clerk came hurriedly into the counting-room to see what call had summoned them.

"A drummer! Fire him out!" shouted the merchant, pointing to my astonished hero.

"Bounce!" said the largest porter.

"Yes, that's my name, but"—

"Git!"

"Skip!"

"Waltz!"

"Flop!"

"Fadel!" and several other slang commands were given, but Tommy was confused, and turned to the merchant for an explanation.

But he had resumed his seat and paper, and Tommy was hustled out of the store at a lively trot.

What the dickens did it mean, anyway?

Turning to the clerk, who stood in the store door laughing at him, he said:

"Young man, if you feel that a little exercise would do you good, you just come out here on the sidewalk and I will assist you to some."

"Oh! take a walk around the block!" replied the grinning clerk.

"I'll walk you around on your ear if you will come out here," replied Tommy, shaking his fist at him.

"Pull down your vest!"

"I'll pull your nose," said he, springing towards the door.

That young clerk shot back out of the way in the half of no time.

Tommy turned away, confused and chagrined, and as he walked along with his heavy sample valise he tried to solve the meaning of the bounce he had just received.

"I believe old Tenpenny is either drunk or just getting over a spree," said he. "Guess he don't like drummers much anyway. May be he has been cheated by one of them."

"While cogitating as he walked along, he came to another hardware store, and without the loss of any of his pluck he boldly entered and asked to see the proprietor. He chanced to be near at hand.

"Good morning, sir. I represent the house of Ebenezer Bounce, hardware dealer, New York, and I"—

"Well, young man, if you are a drummer, you may represent Mr. Bounce on the bounce," replied the proprietor, with a wicked smile, that showed that he thought he had made a first-class pun.

"Sir, I do not understand you," said Tommy.

"Represent Mr. Bounce somewhere else, I don't wish to buy anything; have got more on hand now than I can sell."

"But I have new styles that"—

"That would sell, perhaps, and leave me with a stock of old goods on hand. No, sir, I'm not buying to-day," said he, with a lordly wave of his hand as he turned away.

"Very well, sir, but you are mistaken."

"How so?"

"I didn't come to sell you."

"Then what?"

"Well, I'll tell you," said he, setting his samples down on the counter. "I have just come from Mr. Tenpenny's, after having sold him a large bill, and he wished me to promise that I would not sell you, and"—

"What is that, young man?" exclaimed the merchant. "Old Tenpenny didn't want you to sell me?"

"Of course. Said he would countermand his order if I sold you."

"Great raggickers! Why, the confounded old rascal, I can buy and sell him."

"I wish I could sell him," thought Tommy.

"Now let me tell you, young man, you had better look out for your pay! I can tell you that."

"Oh, I guess that's all right. At all events I shall leave it for my uncle to find out. But I thought it would be no more than fair to call on you and let you see some samples of new goods, so that you can call on us when you go to New York, that's all."

The merchant was almost too mad to speak. Tommy opened his samples and spread them before him, but he scarcely noticed them.

"I say, Jacksnap," said he, calling to his book-keeper,

"If there is anything on the books against Tenpenny, make a bill right out and send it to him; and if he sends over here again for any accommodations, don't let him know that we have got what he wants, the old reprobate."

After sputtering around for a few moments he turned and examined the samples. As a matter of fact, Tommy had samples of goods that the merchants of Buffalo did not have, and the mad dealer wanted them the worst way.

"And you can't sell me the goods?"

"Well, you see how I am fixed," said Tommy, shrugging his shoulders.

"Oh, bah!"

"But I thought it would only be right to call and let you see them. You can call and see us the first time you are down to the city."

"Oh, thunders! I may not go to York for a year. But I say, how large a bill did Tenpenny buy of you?" he asked, after a moment's pause.

"About twenty-five hundred dollars worth," replied Tommy, who was doing some tall talking.

"Well, now, young fellow, I will show you how we can work it. Of course you want to sell the largest bill you can."

"Of course."

"All right. If you will not fill Tenpenny's order, I

will buy a bill of five thousand of you, cash on delivery. What do you say?"

"Well, I hardly know. Will you stand between me and all harm in the matter?"

"Of course I will."

"All right; then I'll do it."

"Good enough."

"Select your order, and I will take no notice of Tenpenny."

The indignant merchant went to work with a will, and in fifteen or twenty minutes had selected an order for a bill of goods amounting to a trifle more than five thousand dollars. This he made out in the form of regular order, and, after signing it, gave it to Tommy, together with directions about shipping the goods.

"There you are, young fellow, and here are three or four references which may be required, as I have never dealt with you before."

"Thank you, sir."

"Now, whenever you are this way again, call on me."

"I certainly shall," replied Tommy, packing up his samples and moving away towards the door.

"Now let old Tenpenny howl. I'll undersell, oversell, and outsell him, in spite of blazes."

"I hope you may," said Tommy, as he left the place, "Victory number one for the Drummer Boy of New York."

Gloating over his good fortune, he bent his steps to another hardware store and called for the proprietor.

"Good day, sir. I am in Buffalo, representing my uncle, Ebenezer Bounce, a large wholesale hardware dealer, whom you may know; and as I have sold bills of our new goods to several of the leading dealers here, I thought it would be only fair for me to call and show you what we have, and give you a chance to put yourself on a footing with them, if you feel so disposed."

"And yet so young!" exclaimed the merchant, who had listened to Tommy's remarks with much astonishment.

"Sir?"

"Great God! what will he be by the time he is forty?" asked the merchant, turning to his partner, who stood near by.

"An auctioneer, perhaps."

"Or a lightning-rod man."

"We are introducing a very fine lot of new and improved articles, gentlemen."

"No, my boy, don't waste your sweetness here, for I assure you it is desert air," said the man, in a half-mocking tone. "But it was very kind of you to call on us—very kind; and if we were taking any stock in drummers we certainly would examine your samples. Good-day," and he was about turning away.

"All right, sir; but allow me to leave our card, so that when you find yourselves losing your custom on account of Mr. Bitstock's having a superior line of goods at the same price, you will know where to order."

"What is that you say, young man, Bitstock?"

"Yes, sir—Hiram Bitstock. Here is his order for five thousand dollars worth of beautiful goods that will take the shine right off of you," said Tommy, flourishing the order.

The two merchants whispered together a moment.

"Good-day, gentlemen. I'll leave our card," said Tommy, turning to go.

"Wait a moment. What have you got?" said they, approaching him with some interest and anxiety.

"I'll show you, gentlemen," he replied, opening his sample-case.

The result was that Tommy sold about fifteen hundred dollars worth of goods of the same description that he had sold to Mr. Bitstock.

"Another one for Pluck," said he, as he left the store. "This drumming is a splendid thing to develop one's cheek."

Entering another store, he sought the owner and began with even greater confidence.

"Good-afternoon, sir. I represent the house of Ebenezer"—

"Here, Sam!" shouted the merchant.

"Comin', sah," and before Tommy could comprehend the situation, a big, strapping negro porter stood between him and the owner.

"A drummer—leave him out!"

"But, my dear sir," said Tommy.

"Bounce him!"

"All right, sah. Come, get 'long out ob dis yer, now—git!" said the porter, pushing him toward the door.

"Don't you strike me," said he.

"Strike you! Golly, I won't neber do dat. I war allus kind ter children. But go right 'long; we don't want no drummers heah, nohow."

"But I'm no drummer."

"Don't care if you am a preacher; I allus does what de boss tells me," said he, opening the door to show Tommy out.

"I say, Sam, tell your boss that he has made an ass of himself. I came to pay a bill that he will never get now," said he, turning away.

"Great possums!" mused Sam, going back to tell his boss about it.

But he had better have said nothing about it, for he got a jawing for his pains; the boss laying it all to him, and spending the remainder of the day trying to think what bill it was that the young man had come to pay.

In fact, it made him very unhappy, and he resolved not to take the next man for a drummer until he really knew whether he was one or not.

The next place he went into happened to be owned by an old friend of his uncle's, and after making himself known, he had no difficulty in selling him a thousand dollars' worth of goods, after which he returned to meet Dovey and to compare notes.

"Not a bad job for your first day's work," said Dovey, after looking over his orders.

Tommy related to him the fun he had had, and how

he managed to get his orders, and they laughed heartily over it.

After supper he wrote a long letter to his uncle, enclosing the orders he had taken, and telling him his experience since leaving New York, after which they walked out to see how the streets and the Buffaloes looked by gaslight.

They found it to be a bright, wide-awake city, with some of the smartest, sharpest boys to be found in any city in the world. Although not living in the metropolis, they were eminently "Boys of New York."

They visited the theaters, and after enjoying themselves first-rate returned home tired, and glad to go to bed.

It was a warm night, and, after returning to their chamber, they threw off their outer garments, opened the windows, and the door leading into the hall, in order to get the cool breeze which blew over the city from Lake Erie.

Lighting each a cigar, they lay down upon their beds to enjoy them, and to talk over the fun of the day, and to lay out plans for the future.

They had not lain many minutes before they heard a noise in the hall, out near the head of the stairs, as though some one was tumbling up on all-fours.

"What's that, I wonder?" asked Dovey.

"A load of whisky, I guess," replied Tommy.

"Hark!"

Presently they heard a shambling, uncertain step, and some one muttering as they came.

"Corn-juice," said Tommy; "I knew it."

In a moment they were enabled to make out a portion of what was being said.

Tommy walked to the door, and there saw an old fellow trying to balance himself along with outstretched hands to steady his course along the hallway. He was about fifty years of age, and it did not require his damaged hat (that looked as if it had been sat on), the knot of his neck-handkerchief round under his ear; his coat buttoned up wrong, or his blazing-red face and half-closed eyes to convince a person that he was drunk.

"Steady, ole man; mussen let on zat yer drunk, or ole woman'll raise skunks. Brace up, an' show yer self—hic!" he muttered, as he worked his way slowly along towards their room. "Don't care snap for ole woman, anyway—damido (hic)! Bust her in'er snoot for shent any time, drunksobers. Wonder if she's sittin' up for me?—hic! If she is, I'll lick her black an' blue, surer'n thunder, seedidn't; an' if she's gone ter bed, I'll lick'er anyhow! Bounter ter have shum, fun fideiorit!"

By this time he had reached within a few feet of their door, and Tommy stepped back, and turned the light almost down, and kept out of the way to see the fun.

"Oh, no, zat's all right; she's left'er door open, didn't yer, ole woman?" said he, as he staggered up against the edge of their door and leered stupidly into the room.

Tommy and Dovey were bursting with laughter, but they held their peace.

"Gone ter bed, old gal, say?"

But there was no reply.

They saw at once that the tipsy old fellow had made a mistake, and supposed their room to be his own, where his wife was waiting for him.

"Besser get up an' hug yer lovin' husband, or I'll stan' yer overhead, will, by thunder, see fiden't," and he braced himself carefully on the edge of the door-jam, and managed to edge himself into the room, or, at least, to the inside of the jam.

Here he stood for a moment looking with his half-closed eyes into the dimly-lighted room.

"Wassermatter, olewoman? Sleep? Don't yer hear yer lovin' husband?" he asked, and then he looked slowly from one of the beds to the other.

"Washer doin' old woman? Where ze ozzor bed come from? Gone ter takin' boarders since I've been away, or has muzzer-in-law come? Benter goin' ter speak ter me? Then I'll wallop yer for fun; been needin' it for shix months," and he made a dive for the bed where Dovey lay, yelling like a wild man.

As quick as thought Dovey caught up his pillow, and standing up on the bed, he met the old fellow as he staggered towards him; he banged him over the head with it, knocking his hat down over his eyes, and nearly shaving his ears off.

Tommy pulled the bell-cord smartly, and then seizing his own pillow, he went for the old fellow, who was bellowing like a bull, and staggering about in the darkness without the slightest idea of what was happening him unless it was a young earthquake had caught him on the fly.

"Hold on, Maria—hold on! I cave, ole woman—I cave!" he bellowed, but without speaking a word they kept banging away at him, knocking him this way and that, and utterly confusing him, and raising a terrible hubbub in the hotel, and bringing everybody at a dead run for the scene.

"Hold on Maria!" the old fellow kept crying, and just before anybody reached the room, Tommy turned up the light.

"What's this?" asked the landlord, rushing into the room.

"That's what we would like to know," said Tommy.

"Maria!" moaned the old man.

"What are you doing here, Mr. Tenpenny?" asked the clerk, the first to recognize the old fellow, assisting him to pull his head out of his hat.

"I dorno. Where's Maria?" he asked, looking mournfully around the room.

"This isn't your room."

"He came in here, and supposing me to be his wife, he began to flog me, and we went for him," said Dovey.

"Thought you was his wife, did he?" said an angular-looking woman, elbowing her way through the crowd in the doorway.

"Here is your wife," said the landlord.

"You were going to flog me, was you?" she asked, taking him by the ear.

"No, no, Maria, I was only fooling," said he, as she led him toward the door.

The amusement he had been subjected to had completely sobered him.

"Come along, I'll give you some fooling, you miserable, drunken old lout."

"Don't, Maria."

"I'll don't you. Come along," she replied, fastening her nippers upon his souse still firmer, and pulling him into the hall.

Their room was only two doors from that occupied by our friends, and the reader understands by this time how the mistake happened to the poor old fellow.

Such a laugh as the affair created was never known in that hotel before.

Tommy told the crowd how he had staggered up stairs and through the hall-way, and how he finally entered their room, supposing it to be his own, and how he fared when he attempted to chastise his wife, mistaking Dovey for her.

It appeared that he was an old boarder at the hotel, and one of the nicest old fellows in the world, a merchant, only he would get full as a goat once in a while, and imagine that he could make his wife toe the mark. But in this he always found his mistake, as she could bring him up to the mark every time, drunk or sober.

The party enjoyed the affair, and the landlord apologized to the young men for the annoyance.

"Oh, don't mention it, my dear sir," said Tommy, "for we haven't had so much fun in a long time as the old fellow has furnished us."

After being left alone Tommy threw himself upon his bed, and laughed long and heartily, during which performance he told his chum all about Tenpenny, and how he fired him out of his store that morning.

The next morning he wrote this note to him:

"DEAR OLD TENPENNY:—You bounced me out of your store yesterday morning, when I attempted to show you some samples, but I had the extreme satisfaction of giving it to you rough last night when you were as drunk as a fiddler's poodle, and come into my room at the hotel, mistaking it for your own, and attempting to flog my room-mate, supposing him to be your wife. You will probably remember the noble spectacle you showed when your wife led you whining from the room. The affair would look first rate in print. Newspapers like just such ludicrous scenes, with all the names in. Farewell, old party. I trust you will not forget TOMMY BOUNCE."

Leaving this in his letter-box at the hotel office, the boys got their breakfast, paid their bill, and at ten o'clock took the cars for Cleveland.

As for poor old Tenpenny, the letter was the crowning thorn in his sorrow. The thought that the affair would get into the papers caused the sweat to ooze from every pore of his body.

He lost no time in going to the different newspaper offices and inquiring if any such report had been sent them, and paying roundly for its suppression should it come thereafter. In fact, he not only cursed his luck, but he registered a vow never to get drunk again, or bluff another drummer that might dawn upon him.

Tommy Bounce left Buffalo in the best of spirits, feeling that he had done a nice business there, and got even with everybody who had given him any trouble; and so, when they were once more on the rail, his heart bounded with joy.

They had ridden for an hour or so, when a clerical-looking man took a seat just ahead of them, and began reading a paper.

They paid no particular attention to this, although Tommy noticed that the man was not reading half so much as he was noting the passengers. Finally he put up his paper and turned to them.

"Young gentlemen, I have a new Chinese game here. Perhaps you would like to see it."

"No, we don't understand Chinese," said Tommy, suspecting him in a moment.

"What is it like?" asked Dovey.

"Oh, it is one of the simplest things in the world. If you will allow me to turn my seat over so that I can sit facing you, I will explain it to you. It may help to kill a long ride." Saying which he turned the back of his seat and sat down.

Tommy nudged his companion.

"You see, I have lately returned from China, where I have been a missionary for a number of years, and while there I picked up a great many ingenious games and puzzles. For instance, this one is performed with three playing-cards. I happen to have them with me now, and knowing how fond young people are of novelties, I will proceed to show you how it works," said he, producing the cards.

Tommy had often read of "three-card monte men," and he instantly suspected that this was one of them, although he had such a pious, respectable air with him that it almost disarmed his suspicions.

"There, I place these cards on my knee, thus, and shift their positions in this way. There you see the cards—the Jack of Spades, the King of Hearts, and Ace of Diamonds. Now I will simply turn them over, face downward, change them back and forth in this simple manner, and you cannot tell which is which," said he.

"That is the Ace of Diamonds," said Dovey, pointing to one of the cards.

The man turned it up and it was the Jack of Spades. "You see how easy it is to be mistaken," said the clerical gentleman, smiling blandly. "There is the Ace of Diamonds," he added, turning it up.

Then he shuffled them again, and one after another attempted to pick out the Ace but missed every time. At last, while telling how he had fooled some gentlemen by this simple game, he carelessly took up the ace and bent one corner of it and then laid it down again.

This did not escape the keen eyes of Tommy, and he

watched the cards as the man talked and slowly shut them, all the while evidently ignorant of the marked card.

"I'll bet I can pick out the ace," said Tommy.

"Oh, no, you cannot, my young friend," replied the man with a smile that was childlike and sweet.

"But I know I can, I'll bet I can."

"Well, my boy, if I were a betting man, I would willingly wager all I have against all you have that you cannot turn up the ace."

The cards had not been moved, and the one with the corner bent up slightly was still in sight, and Tommy thought it would be a good job to get him to bet, so after considerable talk, he offered to bet ten dollars that he could turn it up.

"Well, if you will be rash, you must not blame me. But, perhaps it will learn one or the other of us a good lesson," said the man, producing a ten dollar note, which Tommy at once proceeded to cover with another.

"Now, then, go ahead."

Tommy picked up the marked card, when, lo! it was the Jack of Spades.

"There, didn't I tell you," said the man, as he calmly pocketed the money. "Great game, my friend."

"Yes, huge, if you only know how to play it," said Tommy, bitterly.

"Try it again?"

"No. I've had enough now. I'll see you later, old man."

"All right. Good-bye," said he, getting up and leisurely going into another car.

"Sold, packed and delivered," said Tommy.

"Bow was it anyway?" asked Dovey.

"We shall find out before we get to Cleveland."

CHAPTER X.

WE parted with our friends, Tommy Bounce and George Dovey, soon after the train left Dunkirk on its way to Cleveland, their next stopping place, and Tommy's experience with the three-card monte man will also be remembered.

"There goes the three-card monte man!" cried Tommy, as the fellow left the car. "Look out for your money!"

"What is that you say, young man?" asked an old fellow on the other side of the aisle.

"Gamblers, thieves, swindlers!"

"Oh!" replied the old chap again sitting down.

"What did he say?" asked an old lady of her husband.

"Said somethin' 'bout mortal men, an' lookin' out for yer money, I thought. Cars make such a noise I couldn't hear exactly, I s'pect."

"Marcy on me, Elam, you don't say so?" said the old lady, in evident alarm. "Hain't I better put that wallet in my stocking?"

"Yes, I guess you'd better, Hannah," said he, drawing it from his pocket very cautiously.

"What's the trouble?" asked another couple a few seats away.

"Robbers. Monte men on board the train," was the reply, and in less than ten minutes the matter was being talked about by everybody in the car, and the women folks began to get panicky of course.

When the conductor came into that car again he was grabbed by as many hands as could reach him as he walked along, and they each had something different to say to him, regarding this dreadful robber, the three-card monte man, and demanded that he be put off the train.

The conductor asked Tommy about it, and learning the particulars, he took him with him to the next car for the purpose of pointing him out.

He had taken a seat near some other passengers, and was evidently preparing to open shop and begin business with them.

"You get off at the next station," said the conductor, tapping him on the shoulder.

The gambler looked up in surprise.

"Oh, I know you. Git at the next station."

"You bet," he replied.

"And if I ever catch you on my train again I will heave you off without stopping."

"All right," growled the fellow, pulling his hat down over his eyes and settling further into his seat.

"That is the little game you learned in China while you was missionary there, is it?" asked Tommy. "Better take it back there and practice it, I guess. Good-bye, my Christian friend," and turning, he returned to his own car again, leaving the crest-faller gambler the target of everybody's eyes.

At Meadville the train stopped and the man with his "little Chinese game" was not slow in getting off, greatly to the relief of the timid men and women who regarded him but little short of a blood-thirsty highwayman.

The old chap, who had first inquired of Tommy what the trouble was, now took a seat in front of them for the purpose of learning further particulars regarding the affair.

"Picked ye up for a flat, did he?"

"Yes, and played me for one," replied Tommy.

"Scoop yer much?"

"Oh, no. Only ten dollars. I don't mind the money, but I hate to be taken in by a chap who looks so much like a parson."

"Well, that's his lay."

"I know it, and he got laid out on it, too."

"Conductor bounced him, hey?"

"Fired him out."

"Well, I s'pose it's all right. Everybody's got to have a livin' somehow. But I never let them play me. I know the racket just as well as they do."

"You understand the trick?" asked Dovey.

"Like a sermon."

"Wish I did."

"Simplest thing in the world, young fellow."

"How simple?" asked Tommy.

"I'll show you," said the old fellow, taking a pack of cards from his pocket and selecting three of them from it.

Tommy and Dovey exchanged glances.

"There, you see I place three cards here on my knee, the jack, ace, and queen. Now there they are, all in a row. The trick is in shuffling the cards in such a way as to deceive the eye. For instance, there is the jack. You see it. Well, I take and toss it around in this way; follow it sharply with your eyes. There; now can you find it?"

Tommy turned up one of the cards but it was not the right one.

"Now try again, and I will work slower," said he; "now turn it up! That's it. See? It is all sleight of hand," he added, showing them how the cards were shuffled.

"But how about this marking business? Now I got stuck by seeing him bend up the corner of an ace and leave it so while he shuffled them."

"That's it. Most everybody bites at that dodge. But the fact is, they do not mark the particular card at all. Now see me do it. I take the jack, say, I show it to you, and while talking on some other subject I cautiously turn up the corner of the card, all the while knowing that you are watching me, although pretending that I do not."

Two or three passengers gathered around to see the thing explained.

"Now I lay it down again; shuffle them, and offer to bet that you cannot turn up the jack. You of course insist that you can."

"To be sure. Any fool could do that," said one of the spectators.

The old man glanced up at him with a sort of hungry look.

"My friend, I am not a gambler. I am merely showing these young men the tricks of three-card monte men, and it will mar our pleasure to have you put in your oar," said he, with slight reproof in his voice.

"Oh, I'm not putting in my oar. I was only saying that any tallow-headed idiot could turn up that jack after seeing you shuffle them."

"My dear sir, do you wish to learn ten dollars' worth of three-card monte?" said he at length.

"Yes, I do," replied the man sharply, at the same time going for his "pile."

"All right. You all bear witness that I am not playing the game. In fact, I don't understand it well enough to play it for money. I am simply telling these young gentlemen about it so that they will not get taken in again. But just to teach this man a lesson, and at the same time to illustrate the thing all the better, I'll bet him ten dollars that he cannot turn up the jack."

"All right. Cover that," said the man, placing a ten dollar note in Tommy's hand.

"I cover, my friend."

"Good enough. Now I will proceed to turn it, and at the same time to convince you that you are not half so smart as you think you are."

"All right. Proceed."

The man turned up the card that had one corner bent up, the one that they had all been looking at, but it was the ace and not the jack.

"Thunder and pitch!" exclaimed the man.

"Don't you see?"

"No, I'll be hanged if I do."

"All right. I'll give you another chance for your money. There's the twenty. Cover it, and I'll shuffle them again."

"No, thank you. You won the money fair and I'm a fool, that's all. But you understand the game better than I thought you did."

"Oh, I know how it's done, of course," said the old chap carelessly. "Lost money enough learning, you may bet."

He pocketed the money, and then continued:

"Now, when you thought I turned up the corner of the jack, it was the ace that I had picked up instead. It's all sleight of hand, my friends."

"Let me try it once, just for fun," said another of the spectators.

"Certainly. We are only doing it for fun, anyway," said he, again shuffling the cards.

The man picked out the right card the first time. Then he missed it once or twice. Finally the dealer carelessly turned up the ace while telling them some story about how he was taken in once on a Mississippi steamboat, and the passenger caught a glimpse of it, and instantly concluded that he would get that ten dollars that the old fellow had won so easily.

"I think I can turn the ace for sure this time, and I'll bet ten dollars that I can."

"Nonsense! People will think I am a three-card monte man."

"No they won't. It's all right," urged the man, who had made up his mind to gobble up that ten dollar bill.

"Well, I call upon these gentlemen to witness that I don't wish to bet. But just once I will bet you ten dollars," said that virtuous old man, producing his money.

The courteous passenger covered it, and then made haste to turn up the ace. But he didn't turn it after all. It proved to be the queen, and such a chop-fallen man you never saw. He looked for a moment in astonishment and then returned to his seat. He had got all he wanted.

Tommy and Dovey enjoyed a hearty laugh over the affair, and then the old fellow proceeded to explain further the tricks of the game. In reality, as they afterwards learned, he was an old gambler, but taking a fancy to Tommy he told him all about the game that is so enticing and deceptive. And he had made it pay tolerably well while giving his lessons.

They arrived at Cleveland in due time, and were driven to a hotel. In the evening they went out to see the lights and hear the sounds of this beautiful lake city.

Cleveland, Ohio, is one of the handsomest modern

cities in the world, having a beautiful frontage on the lake, and being regularly laid out, well paved, lighted, and cleaned. The inhabitants are very proud of it, as well they may be.

They visited several points of interest, and finally, as the night was beautiful with moonlight and balmy air, they walked down to one of the wharves and gazed out upon the silvered beauty of that inland sea, Lake Erie.

There were a large number of people there, enjoying the cool air, and dozens of children and young folks playing around, as lively as bees and as blithe as fireflies.

Tommy and Dovey took a seat near the water, and listened to the many sounds which greeted their ears from every side. Near them a number of colored girls and boys were loud and wild in a frolic of some kind. But they paid no more attention to them than to others, and so conversed for some time regarding the different parts of the country they had thus far visited.

While thus engaged a wild shriek rent the air, and brought them to their feet.

"Girl overboard!" shouted a dozen voices, and in an instant there was a wild, exciting cry, and a rush made for the edge of the wharf, from which the girl had fallen while running along the string-piece.

Tommy was among the first, but there was no boat at hand, and no one seemed to stir towards rescuing the girl.

"Where did she go over?" he asked, of a lot of frightened children standing near.

"Just over there," said a dozen, pointing to the spot.

"Then she has gone down. Here, Dovey, hold my things," said Tommy, quickly taking off his coat, vest, and hat, and handing them to his companion.

"Careful, Tommy," said Dovey.

But before he could reply, he leaped into the dark water and disappeared from sight, while people were rushing wildly to the spot and calling in various directions for some one to come to the rescue with a boat.

Tommy found the girl struggling a few feet below the surface, and seizing her around the waist, he brought her quickly to the top.

A wild cheer, greeted him, and in a few minutes a boat was rowed to the spot from a steamer laying near at hand.

In ten minutes from the time he threw off his clothes and leaped overboard, he stood dripping on the wharf, and the half-drowned girl was handed over to her mother, who had been summoned to the spot by the outcries.

"Wish I had a wringing machine," said Tommy, as Dovey approached him.

"Do you wish to ring the belle you just rescued?" asked Dovey, laughing, and the crowd laughed too, as they gathered around to compliment our hero on his exploit.

"There is no need of wringing a joke so dry as that is, Dovey. But I feel as though I would like to be put through a squeezing machine."

"Well, if the authorities are going to allow children to fool around here in this careless way, I think it would be a good idea to set up a laundry in the vicinity."

"That's so. But come on; let us get back to the hotel."

Dovey assisted him on with his cloths and away they started together.

As they passed up into the street with a crowd behind and around them, a reporter of the *Leader* approached and inquired what the excitement was about.

He was not long in finding out the main facts of the case, and lost no time in reaching the side of Tommy as he was walking along.

"Good evening, gentlemen, I have just learned the particulars of your brave rescue of a young lady, and being a reporter for the *Leader*, I would like to be favored with your name and address," said he.

Tommy hesitated at first. It was an entirely new business to him, and he hardly knew what to say, but at length he handed him a card and walked along.

The reporter glanced at it, but still kept walking along after him.

"Thomas Bounce," he read, "and you are"—

"One of the Boys of New York," said Dovey.

"Ah, very good," said the reporter.

"Three cheers for *The Boys of New York*!" said one of the crowd, and those three cheers were given with a right good Western will.

But this ovation was becoming distasteful to Tommy, and he began to think the reporter was a trifle too fresh, so he stepped a moment and looked around.

"A little of that goes a great ways," said he.

"Yes, especially when you have a great ways to go to get away from it," said Dovey.

"Let us get into this carriage and ride to the hotel, and thus escape the crowd."

"All right."

In two minutes the carriage drove up to the curbstone, and the young men got into it, but the crowd passed around and sent up another hearty cheer as they drove away.

"Such is greatness," said Dovey.

"Such is wetness, by gracious. I guess it isn't customary to rescue drowning people here, they make such an ado over it."

"Well, perhaps they are accustomed to doing the business themselves, and are surprised that an outsider should interfere."

"That may be, but they didn't appear to be in much hurry about rescuing this one."

"Maybe they wanted to see if she wouldn't get mad and come out herself; and perhaps she was so homely that they didn't care about saving her. By the way, Tommy, what sort of a looking heroine was this, to the little drama in which you took the leading part?"

"I'll be wrung and hanged if I know. I never looked at her," replied Tommy.

"I heard them call her Julia."

"Well, that's a sweet name, and there ought to be a pretty face go with it. Goodness knows she was heavy enough to be the belle of the city."

"But of course you never tolled her so."

"Of course not; she had lost her tongue, and nobody threw me a rope," replied Tommy laughing.

"Well, you showed good metal anyhow."

"But don't keep ringing it in my ears. Ah! here we are at the hotel."

In a few moments they were in their chamber, and Tommy at once proceeded to change his wet for dry clothing.

They talked and laughed over the affair for some time, and finally went to sleep, thinking what a queer introduction they had received to Lake Erie and her daughter, Cleveland.

The next morning they were up bright and early, and went with the crowd into the hotel dining-room, for both were possessed of appetites that would strike terror to a boarding-house landlady.

Everybody appeared to be busy with the morning's paper, and all interested in some item of local news. Then first one and then another would comment upon it, and our friends soon became convinced that it was all about that rescue of Tommy's the night before.

Then the guests and boarders suddenly discovered that the hero of the romance was at the table with them, and then they called each other's attention to the fact, and poor Tommy was almost stared out of countenance.

They cut their breakfast short, and got out of the room as soon as possible (for being modest as well as brave, they could not bear to see themselves made lions of for doing such a simple duty as rescuing a drowning person when it was in their power to do so.)

The clerk of the hotel met them as they came from the dining-room.

"Well, Mr. Bounce, you had a little swim last evening," said he.

"Yes; I saw no inconveniences for bathing here, and so went down to the river."

"Hee? hee! Very good; very good, indeed. But have you seen this morning's *Leader*?"

"No; what about it?"

"Read that," said the clerk, handing him a paper. Dovey took the paper, and read as follows:

"A YOUNG HERO.

"ONE OF THE BOYS OF NEW YORK.

"Last evening about nine o'clock, some young misses were at play upon the open wharf at the foot of Lake street, and during their romps one of them, Miss Julia Desmond, a lovely girl about fifteen years of age, lost her balance, and fell overboard into the dark waters of the lake. In an instant all was excitement and confusion. The girl had sank out of sight, and no one sprang to her rescue. There was no boat moored near the spot, and the poor girl would have sunk forever from life and sight, had not a young man, Thomas Bounce, a New York boy, thrown aside his coat, and plunged into the water after her.

"A moment of the most intense excitement and anxiety followed, and those who crowded to the string-piece held their breath in suspense as the dread thoughts crept upon them that both were lost. But the brave youth succeeded in securing her and holding her above the water until they were both taken into a boat that came tardily to the spot, and once more placed on dry land.

"Of course the frantic mother was too much excited and overjoyed to return the thanks she must have felt to the youthful hero who had rescued her darling child at the peril of his own life. But the crowd took up the praise of the noble act, and followed him back to the Erie House, where he is stopping, with cheer upon cheer for his generous conduct."

"How's that?" asked the clerk.

"A big pile of words," said Tommy, evidently disgusted.

"But it is true, is it not?"

"Well, yes, the main facts are true, I guess, but what's the use of making such a fuss about a trifling thing like that?"

"Ah, my boy, you are too modest. Come and have a bottle of wine with me; some of the finest you ever tasted."

Tommy was on the point of refusing, but seeing quite a crowd of people coming out of the dining-room and staring at him, he concluded to go almost anywhere for the sake of getting out of sight; so he followed the clerk to one of the parlors, mentally resolving that he would never save another person from drowning or hanging again so long as he lived.

Arriving in the parlor, the clerk took "great pleasure in introducing the hero of the hour" to about a dozen ladies and gentlemen who were there assembled.

Poor Tommy, he almost wished that he had got drowned himself.

He was complimented and made much of for ten minutes or so, and then a servant brought a bottle of wine.

Then they drank to his very good health, and hoped he would tarry long among them.

"Not much, if I know myself," thought Tommy. That was too much honor for him.

While the toasting and greeting was at its height, the landlady came in, followed by an old negro wench and a colored girl about fifteen years of age.

"Mrs. Desmond is here and wishes to thank Mr. Bounce in person for the saving of her daughter last night," said she.

"Yes, yes, here I is. Whar am dat chap as did it?" asked the old woman, bobbing her head around the company.

"This is the young man," said the clerk, pointing

to Tommy, who stood confused and blushing by the table.

"Oh, honey, am dat you?" she cried, and opening her huge arms, she went for poor Tommy like an ostrich.

But Tommy came to his senses just enough to conclude that he didn't want any of that, so he dodged down under her arms and she caught up Dovey instead, without knowing it, and hugged him so that he saw stars.

"Hold on!" he yelled,

"Give it to him, aunty. He did it," said Tommy, laughing.

"Oh, honey, you is so good!" cried the thankful mother. "I could almos' eat yer up!"

"Please don't, it wasn't me," cried Dovey, striving to free himself from her embrace.

The company was laughing in the loudest manner, and Tommy kept out of sight.

"You saved my Jule, and she 'longs to yer."

"Oh, Lord!"

"Yer saved her life."

"No, I did not. It was"—

"Yes, he did," cried Tommy.

"Come here, Jule," said she, calling to her daughter who had been standing near the door, looking bashfully into the room.

She ran to her mother's side. She was a full-blooded negro girl, and seemed quite as anxious to return her thanks as her mother was.

"Here he is, chile. Tank him some mo'."

The girl looked her thanks bashfully, but said nothing.

"She's done gone bashful; but she's a good girl. You saved her life, young man, and she's yours if yer claims her," said she, followed by a loud laugh.

"Confound you and your daughter. I never saved her, and I don't want her," growled Dovey.

"Yes, he does. He told me he was madly in love with her," said Tommy.

"Maybe he's bashful like. Young folks most always be. But we aren't stuck up, if we do 'long ter a good family, and de Cibbal Rights-Bill 'low white men ter marry us."

"Will you go away, my good woman? I did not rescue your beautiful daughter. There stands the fellow who did it," he said, pointing to Tommy.

"Don't you believe him. He's too modest."

"Dat war de one," said the daughter, whispering to her mother.

"What am dat? Hab I made a mistake?" and she opened her arms once more to take in the savior of her child.

But Tommy still thought he didn't care for any of it, and while convulsed with laughter, as were the others, he dodged, just as she made a grab for him, and she caught the clerk of the hotel in her powerful embrace, and just as she did so Tommy tripped her up, and together they tumbled over the center table, knocking it to the floor, and falling on top of the ruins.

"Cheese it!" said Dovey, starting for the door on a run.

"Good-bye," said Tommy, following and waving back his hand, leaving the company in confusion, and the clerk and fat Mrs. Desmond struggling together on the floor, fighting for the mastery.

CHAPTER XI.

We left our friends, Tommy Bounce and George Dovey, just escaping the comical ovations that had been brought about by the old colored woman, Mrs. Desmond, in the honor of Tommy, who had saved her party from drowning the night before.

It was indeed a laughable affair; and it was fully five minutes before that unfortunate hotel clerk could free himself from her loving embrace, as they rolled over and over on the parlor floor, for she fully believed that she had made no mistake this time, and really had the savior of her child.

Tommy, it will be remembered, dodged the honor himself, and by a smart retreat set the old woman upon the clerk of the hotel, and then made matters worse by tripping him up just at the moment of the embrace.

The company by this time had begun to enjoy the fun of the affair, and they fairly yelled with delight as they saw the trick that Tommy played, and the poor clerk struggling to free himself.

Tommy could not resist the temptation to turn back and watch the contest, but the moment he saw him regain his feet, he started on a run for his room, and locked the door.

"Confound you, you old black fool!" shouted the clerk, trampling upon the broken glasses, and breaking away from her. "What in thunder do you mean, I'd like to know!"

"Wanted fo' ter thank ye fo' savin' my chile," said the woman.

"Confound you and your child! Get out of this house as quick as legs will carry you."

"Come, mammy," said her daughter.

"But don't wait fo' ter thank dis yer brave good man fo' savin' ob your life?" she asked, half mournfully, whereat the company roared with laughter.

"You're a fool!" shouted the clerk.

"Needn't be quite so mad 'bout it."

"Celar out, I tell you!"

"P'raps you is mad because it was not a white gal dat you saved," said she, bitterly, and again the company laughed loudly.

"I never had anything to do with your daughter."

"Shamed fo' ter own it now afo' dese yer ladies, I speck. But I's much obliged ter yer all de same."

"Woman, will you go?"

"Course I will. Come, Jule," said she, taking her daughter's hand.

"You made a mistake, mammy," said the girl with a bewildered look.

"Make 'stake? How dat?"

"Dat man amn't de one at all."

The old woman looked from one to the other of the company with a bewilderment that was absolutely comical, and the company laughed again.

"Wha' fo' I got fool so much? Whar am de right man?"

"He done gone, mammy."

"An' I didn't hug him after all?"

"You've done hugging enough here," said the landlord.

"Yes; get out!" added the clerk.

"Wal, if dat amn't a shame. But you tell dat man, whoever he am, dat I longs fo' ter take him in my thankful arms."

"Thankful thunder. I guess he was smart enough not to want any of your thankful hugging."

"Oh, yes; I speck he's one ob dem stuck-up chaps like you. I hear all ob dem New York boys am. But come, Jule, let us go," said she, leaving the room, greatly to the relief of the unhappy clerk.

But he did not hear the last of the lusty hugging match for many a day after, and even now, if you ask him about it, he will open a bottle of wine rather than stand the laugh.

As soon as the matter was settled, Tommy took his hardware samples and started out to see if he could drum up a few orders, for the reader will remember that he was combining business with pleasure, and drumming for Uncle Ebenezer, the great hardware merchant of New York.

Dovey did not accompany him, but started out to see the city and become acquainted with the various points of interest.

But Tommy soon learnt that the hardware merchants of Cleveland had been fooled, and were quite as shy of drummers as they were in Buffalo. He visited two or three of them without being able to sell anything and he began to think that he stood a poor chance for making either fame or money in the city.

At length he called upon one huge concern and sought an interview with one of the proprietors.

"Good day, sir. I represent the house of Ebenezer Bounce, of New York, and I called to show you some specimens of"—

"Exactly! There is one specimen that I should like very much to see," said the merchant, looking coldly at him.

"Very well, sir. What may that be?" asked Tommy all business and innocence.

"A specimen of your walking," replied he, with a contemptuous tone.

Tommy "dropped" to the joke right away.

"Oh, that's it, eh? Well, I'm a good walker," he said, smiling blandly.

"I presume so."

"I will show you a specimen," he added, walking further back into the store.

Taking a seat in an arm-chair, he drew forth a cigar, and lit it calmly as though he had been in his own room, while the astonished merchant and his clerk looked as though overwhelmed at our hero's polished cheek.

"Well, that's cool," said the merchant.

"A chap must keep cool this weather, you know."

"Well, by thunder I think if a person owned your cheek he wouldn't be obliged to buy ice. That is not the direction I wish you to walk in, sir."

"But I'm not to blame in that. You did not mention any particular direction in which you wished to see a specimen of my walking exhibited, and so I chose this one. I trust you are not offended."

"Great Moses!" exclaimed the exasperated man.

"Offended? Oh, no, I am delighted."

"Thank you, sir."

"Young man, I believe in the eternal fitness of things, and I once in a while come across a person occupying positions in life for which Nature evidently intended them. Nature undoubtedly cut you out and made you up for a drummer. I congratulate your employer."

"Thanks. But, if you believe this, you should not blame me for calling on you to drum, any more than you would a partridge for drumming."

"Well, I suppose I ought not too," replied the merchant, laughing.

"Good enough. Now I have samples of hardware which cannot be bought outside of my uncle's store, he being the manufacturer of them, and seeing that we understand each other allow me to show them to you," said Tommy, opening his sample-cases.

"Well, all right. Go ahead."

The upshot of it was that Tommy sold the man a thousand dollars worth of goods, and they parted the best of friends, he even going so far as to apologize to him for his rudeness, and, of course, as Tommy had won the game, he could well afford to make friends with him.

Leaving Mr. Zip's store, he started back to another one where he had been rudely bluffed a short time before, bent on having a little fun and selling some goods, for he could never bear to give up anything he had once attempted.

Mr. Barty was a cross, crabbed old fellow, and when Tommy had called on him, he snubbed him badly, and almost drove him out of his store when he attempted to sell him a bill of goods.

When he saw him coming in again, the old man looked around for a whip, or something to go for him with.

"You back here again, you infernal, cheeky little cuss, you?"

"Yes, here I am again," replied Tommy, cheerfully.

"Git out! Go away from here!" whined the old curmudgeon.

"Oh, I haven't come to sell you any goods this time, but Mr. Zip asked me to call and tell you that he would sell you his whole stock of door trimmings ten per cent. less than you can buy them in New York."

"Bah! I don't believe it. What does he want to sell out at a sacrifice for?"

"Well, I have just sold him a large bill of our new styles, and improved qualities of goods, such as they are using in New York and Buffalo, and knowing that the old styles will not sell for cost now, he naturally wants to unload."

Old Barty rolled up his eyes and looked bothered.

"So he said to me," continued Tommy, "don't you go near old Barty, and I'll sell the old foggy all the old-fashioned stuff I've got on hand."

"Did he say that? did Tom Zip say that?" howled the old man, springing forward with clenched fist, and blood in his eye.

Tommy bowed.

"The contemptible upstart! Why, I can buy and sell such fellows as he is."

"I dare say; but I guess he will beat you on buying and selling hardware," said Tommy quietly.

"The scoundrell! You had better look out for your pay, if he has bought much."

"Oh, he has given me New York references that I shall send on with his order, so I run no risk. But I only stopped to tell you what he said about his old-fashioned stock, that's all. Good-day."

"Hold on. Stop a moment," cried the old man, following him towards the door.

"Can't do it, sir. Going out of town this evening, and so I must hurry up."

"But let me see your goods."

"Haven't time. But I'll be this way again in a year or two. Tra-la-la, pop," said he, going.

"Hold on. I want to buy."

"Go buy of Zip," said he, going from the store.

The old man called after him two or three times, but Tommy paid no attention to him, and he went back into the store to club himself for his bad luck.

"Now then, for Toledo," he said, after he had written to his uncle enclosing the order he had taken.

"Got enough of Cleveland?" said Dovey.

"Yes, enough for this time. I am anxious to get out West."

"Out West, don't you call this out West?"

"Bless you, no. Go a thousand miles west of the Mississippi, and then you will hear them talk about 'out West.' Come, are you ready?"

"All ready."

"Then we will catch the five o'clock train. But let us go down first and pay our parting respects to the clerk."

"Certainly, he would feel bad if we didn't."

In a few moments they stood before the clerk's desk paying their hotel bill. But that much-hugged clerk was still in bad humor, and never a smile stole over his features as he took their money.

"Good-bye, Mr. Clerk," said Tommy, as he took up his traveling-bag to go. "The next time you save a colored girl from drowning, don't give it away, or you may get another hugging."

"Oh, you go to thunder," he growled.

"No, I'm going to Toledo."

"Well, I don't care where you go, for if it had not been for you I should not have got into that ridiculous scrape."

"Ridiculous! why, my dear sir, there are some men in the world who would be delighted with such earnest demonstrations of gratitude."

"Bah!"

"Day-day; didn't break any of your ribs, I hope," said he, turning to the door.

"I'll break your head!"

"Oh, no, don't do that, for it might make it ache. But don't be so fresh next time in asking people to drink wine and be introduced as a hero. Bye-bye."

That clerk could have thrown his book at him, but Tommy was gone in a moment.

In fifteen minutes they were seated in a car of the Great Western express, bound still farther away from their friends in New York.

The car was about half-filled with passengers, and so our heroes selected one seat and turned another to face it, making a very comfortable arrangement for the ride.

But just before the train started an old man and his wife came bustling in, and nothing would do but they must sit on the same side of the car where Tommy and Dovey were, as they wished to see how somebody's crops looked a few miles out of the city, located on this side of the track.

Now the boys were all ready, with their backs toward the locomotive and their feet on the seat in front of them, and the old couple insisted on having one of the seats.

"Take this one, Dan'l," said she, "for I can't ride backwards; makes me throw up awful."

"Arn't one seat 'bout nuff for you, young chap?" asked the old man, motioning their feet away.

The boys took them down reluctantly. They would have resisted the order had not the old chap looked as though it would be an easy matter for him to put one of them in each coat-pocket.

"Well, I suppose it's all right, if he don't have any other of those fits," said Tommy, soberly.

"Hev a what?" asked the old hoosier, just as he was about to take a seat by his wife.

"A fit."

"What in thunder's he having fits about?"

"What is it, Dan'l?" asked his wife, anxiously.

"I am taking this young man to the lunatic asylum in Toledo, that's all," replied Tommy.

Dovey dropped to the racket and made up some horrible mugs.

"Great Jemima, Dan'l."

"Oh it may be all right; he is perfectly harmless if he is not molested, but he is apt to have insane fits when strangers are near."

"Oh, Dan'l, let's go," said his wife. "I do believe he's going to have another one. See how queer he looks."

Dovey was "mugging" it wonderfully.

"What's he do when he has 'em?" asked the old man, as though to show his wife that he was not afraid.

"Well, that depends how he is influenced. He choked a poor colored woman almost to death on the way to Cleveland."

"Oh, let's get away, Dan'l," moaned his wife.

"Oh, I guess he won't harm nuthin'," replied the man, looking curiously at Dovey, who was rolling his eyes about wildly.

"No, I guess we can manage him," said Tommy, reassuringly, at the same time pulling Dovey's hat down over his eyes and arranging him in other respects.

"Dan'l Humpsome, do you hear me?" said she, sharply. "I won't set here, an' you wouldn't ask me to if you didn't hope he'd kill me. Get out, I tell yer."

She rose in her might and gave him a push which sent him out into the aisle, where she followed without loss of time.

But there was no other double seat on that side of the car, and so they went into the next one to try their luck, leaving Tommy and Dovey alone in their glory again.

Such a laugh as they had was enough to make them both grow fat, and it was joined in by three or four others who had witnessed the artful dodge to get rid of the unwelcome intruders.

They settled back into their double seat and began to take in all that was visible in the setting sunlight without and within the car.

On they sped, mile after mile, on this beautiful Lake Shore road, chatting and laughing, happy in themselves and at peace with the world.

Finally, at one of the stations, a little old German got in. He had somehow managed to get left by the regular emigrant train, and through the exertions of the station agent he was taken on board this train and sent ahead to catch up with the one that had run away from him.

He was a fine sample of a German emigrant, with his long blue coat with big brass buttons, his quaint, wide-visor cap and wooden shoes.

The moment he came in and began looking timidly around for a seat, our mischievous friends spotted him of course, as they did everything that held out the least promise for a bit of fun.

The seat opposite, on the other side of the aisle, was vacant, and after looking at it anxiously for a few moments, as though expecting it to invite him to sit on it, he cautiously let himself down.

"If he only understood English, we might have some fun with him," said Tommy.

"That's so. Too bad. But perhaps he does."

"I'll see," and turning to the emigrant, he said:

"Spraeken dot Englisher?"

"Nine—only 'iddle," replied he, and then he began to tell of his mishap in German.

"Very interesting, indeed," said Dovey.

"Yes, it probably would be if we only knew what the deuce he is jabbering about. But I say, I wonder if he would understand this?" said he, taking a flask of brandy from his bag.

"Try him. It is a universal language I guess."

"We'll try it ourselves first."

"But you forget," said Dovey.

"What?"

"That we only carry this flask for medicinal purposes."

"Yes, I remember. Let me see," said he, reflecting.

"Ah! I knew there was something the matter with me."

"What is it?"

"I have got a cinder in my eye," said he, helping himself to some of the medicine.

The Dutchman was eyeing him sharply.

"So you are making eye-water of it, are you?"

"Well, it's all in my eye anyway. I say, my friend," he added, handing it towards the emigrant, "try some."

"Dry some! Got for tam, yaw," said he, reaching for the flask.

"All right. Wet your whistle."

He waited for no further invitation; but when he handed that liquor-holder back to its owner, it was very much lighter than it was before, and he smacked his lips approvingly.

"Dot vas goot."

"I should say so. I say, Dovey, what a big whistle he must have?"

"By jingoos, you ought to have a big one."

"Why so?"

"Because you will have to 'whistle' for your brandy, sure."

"That's so; but I guess we can get fun enough out of him to make it even."

While conversing thus, the emigrant took out his long-stemmed German pipe and filled it with tobacco. The brandy had taken away his timidity, and the interest which Tommy and Dovey took in him made him feel quite at home.

"Smokem?" he asked, pointing to his pipe.

"Oh, yes?" said Tommy.

"Goot!" he exclaimed, as he went down into his deep pocket in search of a match.

The boys nudged each other and waited to see what would follow.

Without much delay he lighted his pipe and settled back into the luxurious seat with a grunt of satisfaction, and began to puff away like a young locomotive, while Tommy and his companion looked as honest as owls.

Presently the smoke began to range through the car, and one after another was set to coughing or sneezing. There were three or four ladies in the seats, and they made a great time and asked where the conductor was.

"Put out that pipe!" yelled the men.

"Put out the smoke!" said another.

"Stop the train!"

"Fire him out!"

"Whew!"

"Dry up!"

And a dozen other calls were made by the outraged passengers.

But that contented Dutchman understood not, cared not. He was happy, and nothing short of a collision or a jump of the train down an embankment would have roused him.

At length one of the outraged passengers went through the car and found the conductor, who hurried to the smoke-house. Grabbing him by the shoulder he gave him a terrific shake.

"Here! What the dickens are you doing?"

"Smokem," replied the emigrant, calmly.

"Well, you just get out of here."

"Nix."

"No," and then, addressing him in German, he told him that he was doing decidedly wrong.

The emigrant, without suspecting that a trick had been played upon him, told the conductor how he had asked Tommy if he could smoke, and he had told him he could.

The conductor turned to Tommy,

"Did you tell this man he could smoke here?"

"Did I? Well, he asked me if he could smoke here, and I told him yes, for all I cared. It was none of my business, and I am not running the train," he replied, as honest as a hen.

"Oh, that was it, eh? You are a nice young man!"

"Who is the conductor of this train—you or I?"

"I am."

"That's so. How should I know the rules? How was I to know that he wouldn't get mad and put a head on me if I said no? Oh, no, old man. I pay a strict attention to business, and if a man asks me if he may smoke, I shall tell him to smoke or not, just as he has a mind to," said he, settling back comfortably in his seat.

The conductor conversed a moment with the German, and he put away his pipe reluctantly. With a look that was calculated to be reproving, the conductor turned and left the car.

It was now dark, and the Dutchman soon forgot himself and lay fast asleep back in his seat, with his mouth wide open and lost to everything. And this was the case with all the other passengers, Tommy and Dovey excepted.

When the coast was all clear and the loud snore of the emigrant could be heard above the noise of the train, Tommy set about playing a trick on him.

He had in his bag a bunch of strong tape, and taking this he fastened a fish-hook to one end of it securely. The hook he attached to the Dutchman's cap, and then cut off about four feet of the tape.

Then he tied another end around his arm, and by standing upon the arm of a seat he fastened the other end to the bell-cord. The car was but dimly lighted and the tape could scarcely be seen.

When all was in readiness he tied the other end of the string that was attached to his cap to the arm of a seat across the aisle, doing the whole without disturbing the sleeper or attracting the attention of any other occupant of the car.

Then they changed their seats to a vacant one five or six seats behind the snoozer; each put on a false moustache, and while pretending to be asleep, awaited results.

In about fifteen minutes a brakeman started to go through the car, and, running against the string, pulled the Dutchman's hat off with a jerk that almost took scalp and all, and, of course, roused him in an instant.

"Got in himmel!" he yelled, as he made a dive down the aisle after the brakeman, to recover his hat, and in his excitement, pulling the bell-cord with the string that was attached to his arm, but afterwards breaking it, and all the while without knowing what had happened.

Of course the signal was given, and the train began to slacken speed, while the emigrant was abusing the brakeman for knocking off his hat, and creating a great excitement among the suddenly awakened passengers.

"I never touched your hat," persisted the brakeman, and when the Dutchman shook his fist in his face, and jabbered his indignation, he turned and kicked the cap away up the aisle, breaking it from the fish-hook of course, and leaving nothing to turn suspicion on Tommy.

In an instant that mad Dutchman went for that mad brakeman, and just as they clinched the train came to a stand still, and the conductor rushed in to learn what the trouble was, and just in time to get between the two fighters, the passengers being all on their feet.

It took fully five minutes of German and English jawing to explain matters, and then they were not explained, for who pulled the signal cord?

Finally everything was arranged and the train started, although it would be impossible to this day to make him believe that the brakeman did not knock his hat off on purpose to create a row.

The next day, however, the remains of the string attached to the bell-cord, and that attached to the arm of the seat, afforded a solution to the affair, and that conductor is in hopes he may have Tommy and Dovey for passengers again sometime.

About ten o'clock, nothing further having happened, our friends arrived at Toledo and left the train. A coachman bargained to take them to a hotel, but before he had gone a dozen rods the tire of one of his wheels came off, and he was obliged to stop and wait for another coachman to take the job off his hands.

"Tire come off, eh?" asked Dovey. "Well, your old boat looks as though it should have been retired long ago."

The driver grinned at the joke feebly.

"Nonsense," said Tommy, pointing to the broken wheel, "This wheel is waiting for the other three!"

"How so?" asked the driver.

"Because the other three are tired, and this one is not," he said.

"Well spoken," groaned the driver, with another grin.

But another carriage soon came up, and they were driven to their destination, tired, hungry, and glad to go to bed.

CHAPTER XII.

We left Tommy Bounce and his friend Dovey at Toledo, Ohio.

It is a bright, smart, handsome place, and hundreds of the readers of THE BOYS LIBRARY are proud to call it their home.

But they did not meet with any very comical adventures in Toledo, and Tommy paid strict attention to business, selling several bills of goods and forwarding the orders to his uncle in New York.

From Toledo they went to Chicago, the great wide-awake, red-hot, go-ahead, git-up-and-git city of the Northwest.

"The place we have heard so much about, all hail!" said Dovey, as they stepped from the cars.

"What's all hell?" asked a hackman, who was standing near.

"The place where hackmen go on their last trip," replied Dovey.

"Young men, I strongly suspect that you are not ministers."

"Well, will you take us to the Tremont House any cheaper on account of your suspicion?" asked Tommy.

"Certainly; right this way. Nice carriage and careful driver," replied the man, briskly.

"Oh, never mind about recommending the driver, for if the carriage is nice he will be sure to drive both slow and careful."

In a few moments they were housed in a comfortable room at the hotel, and their trunks were soon brought up by the Irish porter; for they had made up their minds to stay in Chicago quite a while, and become thoroughly acquainted with the elephant there.

"What do you drink, porter?" asked Dovey, as the stout fellow put down the trunk.

"No, sur, I do bee's drinkin' a sup o' whisky now an' agin, when some gintleman offers it to me," replied the porter who misunderstood the question.

Both Tommy and Dovey laughed heartily over the "Irish bull," while the man stood respectfully by, expecting a fee for his work instead of the joke he had unwittingly perpetrated.

"Then you cannot drink—porter?"

"Not very well, sur. Sure, it's only fit for Englishmen ter drink."

"On, very well, so long as you do not drink, porter, we will not offer you a neat drop of Irish whisky," said Tommy.

"Sure, sur, I think ye mistook me."

"Well, how is a person to understand a person anyway when he first says he does, and then that he does not drink?"

"I guess he has been drinking already."

"Divil a sup, sur, these three days."

"Well, here's a quarter for you. Go and start a hotel with it," said Tommy, handing it to him and turning away carelessly.

The son of Erin looked first at the quarter and then at the honest giver.

"Start a hotel," he muttered. "How wud I start a hotel wid a quarter of a dollar, sur?" he finally asked with a half grin.

"Why, that is the easiest thing in the world to do."

Paddy scratched his head, for the boys looked so honest and earnest that he scarcely suspected a joke.

"Faith, I'd loike to know how, to, an' I wud."

"Give me ten cents and I will tell you how to start a hotel as large as the Palmer House with a quarter," said Tommy.

"Sure, sur you must be foolin'."

"No, sir, I never fool. What! the son of a deacon fool? No, no."

"Sure, I axes yer pardon. But I'll give ye tin cints if ye'll be afther telling me how I can start a hotel wid a quarter."

"All right. Dive for your soap."

"Which?" asked the puzzled porter.

"Develope your pile."

"My what?"

"Dust your wallet."

"Begorra, young man, but ye have the best of me now. Sure I don't do ony dustin'. The chamber-girl does that."

"No, no! put up your money."

"Och! Bad luck ter me thick head! I didn't understand ye, sur."

"It was all Greek to him, and yet it is a wonder that he didn't understand it," said Dovey.

"Here is yer tin cints, sur. Now be afther tellin' me how ter start a hotel wid a quarter."

"But you mustn't give it away."

"Bad manners ter me, der yer think I'm such a soft-headed fool as ter be givin' away a hotel."

"No, no; I don't mean that. You mustn't tell how it is done."

"Och, sure, I'll never say a word."

"Will you swear to us that you will never sell or give away the secret?"

"Faith, I do, thin."

"That you will never speak of it to any man, woman or child?"

"I swear it!" said he, solemnly.

"Well, then, this is how you can start a hotel with a quarter. Buy a quarter's worth of powder, and make a bonfire of it in the cellar of a hotel, and if it doesn't 'start' it, I will give you my head."

The porter's mouth opened; his eyes stuck out like hard-boiled eggs, and he seemed to be utterly dumb-founded as he stood gazing at the boys.

"Try it, if you don't believe it," said Dovey, "Well, by me sowl! I think ye're right, young man—I think ye are right. Sure, I'm a bigger goose than the darndest jackass in Chicago not to see the point of that joke."

"But you won't give it away?"

"Ho! ho! ho! Give it away! Well, upon me sowl, I'll go out and hire a policeman for to club this thick head of mine fur bein' so soft. Walla! walla! only to think. Begorra, I'll play that joke on somebody else, so I will," said he, turning to the door.

"Well, here is your ten cents. Go and get a drink with it before you try."

"Sure, I will. Faith, ye are a pair of sly boots I'm after suspectin'."

"Oh, no. Sly boots do not fit us at all."

The porter went away laughing, while the two boys proceeded to wash and dress, and to get ready to see the city.

Going directly for his drink, the porter then turned his attention to two or three of his fellows, determined to play the joke on them.

"Sure, lads, I've found out how ter build a hotel wid a quarther," said he.

"A quarther of what—a million?" asked one of them.

"No, faith—a quarther of a dollar."

"Go way wid ye. Sure, ye've had a sup an' ye talks loike a crazy man."

"A hotel for a quarther," exclaimed another.

"A little one for a cint, I guess."

"No, begorra, but a hotel the loikes o' the Palmer House!"

"Och, sure! it must have been quare liquor ye jist had."

"Divil a bit of it. Faith, I'll lay ye a dollar I'll show ye how it can be done."

"Be jabbers, I'll take a dollars worth of nonsense out o' ye, Pat Rooney," said his companion, producing a dollar. "There's yer money, now be afther puttin' up or shuttin' up."

"Bejabbers, I'll put up," replied Pat, seeing a chance to make a dollar and have a joke at the same time, as he thought.

"Now then, go on an' tell us how ye can build a hotel for a quarther?"

"All right. This is how it is. Ye buy a pound of powder and build a fire of it in the cellar of a hotel. See?"

A shout of derision was his only answer.

"Don't you see the joke?" he cried.

"Are ye a durn fool, Pat? How wud the buildin' of a fire of powder build a hotel?"

"Indade, it wud blow it ter the devil," said another. Paddy was scratching his head and trying to see where he had made a mistake.

"The money is mine," said his opponent, placing it in his pocket.

Pat offered no resistance or remonstrance, for he was trying to trace out that joke that Tommy had played on him, but he had got it so badly mixed up that he could make neither head or tail of it, and the laugh which his fellows gave him only confused him the more.

"Begorra, but there is a joke about it somehow," he muttered.

"Faith, I think there is, an' that ye have the full benefit of it yerself."

"Bad luck ter me; I'll go for a policeman now onyhow," he muttered, "for if iver there was a darn fool that needed clubbin' its me," and he walked away amid a shout of laughter.

That joke came to him about a month after that, but he never could peddle it successfully.

After Tommy and Dovey were about ready to go out, Tommy rang the bell, and when one of the hall-boys came, he handed him a note and told him to give it to the barkeeper.

The barkeeper was completely puzzled, and read the note over two or three times.

It ran as follows:

"DEAR SIR:—Coming here from Toledo on the train, we have voluntarily partaken of an overdose of the residue of the locomotive, and other infinitesimal upheavings, and the parched condition of our throats indicates the absence of some liquid mollifier. We trust you will proceed without loss of time to concoct for us a lotion composed of one part water, one part ice, three parts being the best distillation from Indian maize. Let there be in it a bitter ingredient, known as Angustore, some saccharine matter, and the rind of some tropical fruit. Make in two doses for room No. —."

"What in thunder does this mean, boy?"

"I don't know, I brought it from their room."

"Are they sick?"

"I didn't see anybody sick."

"Well, they must be. Here, take this over to the drug store, and see if they can make it out."

The boy did as directed, and one of the clerks puzzled his brains over it for some time and gave it up in disgust.

"Take it back to the room and ask them what they want," said the barkeeper, after the boy had returned with the document.

"The barkeeper told me to ask you what it is you want."

"A couple of nice whisky cocktails," said Tommy.

"Ask him if he cannot read."

The boy returned with the message.

"What! Does that mean whisky cocktails?" he yelled. "Great snakes! What kind o' chaps are they?"

"Young fellows."

"Foolish as?"

"No, I guess not."

"Great spoons!" he muttered, as he proceeded to fill the order. "Well, if that don't beat all the calls I ever had I'll chaw sugar. I'll just have that document framed and hung up here, see! I don't. Don't get such high-toned orders every day. Here, take them up there with my compliments, and tell them that whenever they come my way I'll open a bottle on the strength of this."

The boy started away to do as he had been told, and the barkeeper fell to reading the order over again. He showed it to everybody that came in, and raised much curiosity to see the author of it.

After a while Tommy and Dovey started out to get their first sight at the Chicago elephant, and they were not long in finding that he was an animal of very large dimensions, possessing a very frisky trunk.

Coming out upon Milwaukee Avenue, they concluded to take a street-car and ride awhile; but in order to see all the sights they both stood upon the platform.

This furnished a very enjoyable ride, and they took it all in, as may well be believed.

But standing on the platform with them was a Dutchman who seemed determined to make himself disagreeable. He would crowd them first to one side and then the other, and appeared anxious to bully them in every way.

They paid no attention to him, knowing that he was a bad one; but Tommy made up his mind to get even with him somehow.

He wore a long old country coat, the skirts of which were as long as the present fashion of Ulster coats, but the waist was very short, and the two tails were parted clear up to it. His vest was red, and in all other respects, even to the wooden shoes, he was a regular old Dutchman in his make-up.

Tommy was seated next to him on the rail, and Dovey was standing up with his back to the car.

"Yaw! you dinks yourself mighty edward, don't id, mid your store clods on so fine!" he sneered.

But Dovey made no reply.

"If you vas my poy, I schusd smack you und make you yerk," he continued.

"No you wouldn't," Dovey replied at length.

"What vor I would nod?"

"Because I should blow your bloody old roof off first!"

"Oh! hal py Cot! und you carry a bop already, ah?"

"Shut up!" said the conductor, who had noticed the man's disposition to pick a row.

"Vhat vor I shud ub?" he growled.

"I'll let you know what for, if you don't shut that bloody old snag-box of yours."

Seeing that he was liable to get where it was somewhat warm, he proceeded to dry up and take it out in looking ugly.

While this was going on, Tommy had taken one of the Dutchman's long coat-tails and wound it around the rail near to which he sat, after which he stood up and managed to get around on the other side, so that in case, he was discovered he could get out of the way.

They rode along a few blocks further, when the disagreeable fellow suddenly saw that he had gone by his street and started to jump off.

He reached the ground, but that long coat-tail was wound around too securely to let go very easily, and so, before he knew what had happened to him, he was thrown to the ground and dragged bumpety-bump upon the paving stones.

"Wah! wah! wah!" he yelled, lustily. "Stob der gar! Stob id! Oh! oh! ulal!"

But no one appeared to be in any hurry to liberate him, and pretty soon in his struggles he ripped that long coat clear up the back. In fact, he was completely skinned of one half of his coat and most thoroughly bruised, banded and covered with mud besides.

Such a mad Dutchman was never seen in Chicago before. He swore in fractured German and jawed in broken English. He actually tried to pull up a paving stone to throw at the receding car.

His cap was in one place; half of his coat hanging to one half of his body, and the other half hanging to the hand rail of the car; and picking himself up, he started towards where his hat lay.

Then he happened to think of his coat, and he turned and ran after the car, shouting, "Bolice!" and waving his arms for the car to stop. Such a comical sight was never seen.

At length the conductor unhitched the half of the coat and allowed it to fall to the ground, and as they rode away they saw a crowd gathering around the shouting Dutchman, curious to learn what it meant to see a man with half a coat on.

"I wonder if that won't knock some decency into him?" said the conductor.

"No. You'd have to drag him by the heels and let his head bump on the pavement for a mile or two in order to do that," said Dovey.

"Well, I'll bet he'll behave better, if he does not look so well as he did before. But I guess he'll take care of his coat-tails next time," said Tommy.

The boys got off a few blocks further on, and concluded they would walk a while.

"Twig the old coon ahead of us," said Dovey, pointing to an old darkey with a bucket of whitewash balanced on the end of a long brush-handle.

"Yes. Wait a moment," said Tommy, going up to him. "I beg pardon, sir; be good enough to tell me what town this is."

He touched the old fellow on the arm, and that made him turn suddenly around, swinging his bucket of whitewash up against a foppish-looking chap and spilling it all over him. This accident of course knocked the question right out of the whitewasher's head, and in his confusion he scattered the whitening all around.

"Hello! you confounded old blacking-bottle, what are you doing?" yelled the fop.

"Wha—wha—who dar?" said he, in his bewilderment.

"Who—thunder? See here, you awkward old dromedary; you have ruined my clothes," said the indignant chap, trying to shake the lime from his person.

"Who dar—who done gone speakin' ter me 'bout dis yer town?" he asked, looking around at the crowd that had assembled and into which Tommy and his chum had vanished.

"You old fool, you must pay for this!"

"Boss, I don't know nuffin' 'bout it."

"The blazes you don't! You swung your cursed old bucket around and spilled the contents all over me, and yet you have the cheek to tell me that you know nothing about it."

"Fo' de lord, boss, it were all an accident."

"Ax—devil!"

"No, boss fo' I was walkin' long heah a lookin' sc' wok, an' somebody comed 'long side ob me an' ax me somefin' 'bout what de name of dis yer town am."

"Ah! too thin, old man," said several.

"He's got the jim-jams," said another.

"Goshermighty, wha' make me hab jim-jams, not habin' any dinner ter day?" said the old artist, turning savagely upon the chap. "Haint drunk a glass ob nuffin nigh on ter ten yea'. Go way wid you feolin' wid 'spectable old men."

"But this won't pay for my clothes," whined the discomfited dandy.

"Pull down your vest!" shouted a boy.

"Wipe your chin!" yelled another, and the laugh was fairly turned from the old darkey to the young fop.

"Get the old man to finish his job," said Tommy.

"Yes, let him spread the whitewash all over nicely and then the accident will not show," said a bystander, whereat there was a loud laugh and cries of "good."

In spite of being so white, things were looking rather blue for the youth, and so he thought it the best thing he could do to make himself scarce in that locality.

Of course, when the trouble was all over with, a policeman put in an appearance, and in a loud tone demanded to know the reason for the crowd.

"Been a murder," said one.

"Blood all over the sidewalk," said another, and the officer looked around to find it.

"Man stole a coat from this old darkey," suggested Tommy.

"Who—where is he?" demanded the officer.

"There he goes just around the corner. See!"

The officer started on a run after the retreating chap with the whitewash on his clothes, and grabbing him by the collar of his coat, snaked him roughly back to where he had met his mishap.

"Come along, I know you," said he.

"Know thunder! What are you doing?" demanded the victim.

"You have stolen a coat from this man," said he, pointing to the negro.

"I should think so. Look at me."

"Oh, I know you! What kind of a coat did he steal from you, old man?"

"Who dar—wha?" said the old man, all unable to understand the matter.

"A coat of whitewash!" said Tommy, using his ventriloquial powers, and throwing his voice in another direction.

A wild shout went up, mingled with shouts of "Sold, Sold!" and instantly understanding that such was the case, the officer let go of his prisoner, and made a dive for the crowd with his club, hitting right and left.

"Clear out, you vagabonds!" he shouted.

"Button up your ulster!"

"Pull down your vest!" and other cries of derision greeted him from the fleeing boys.

Seeing no other chance to get even, he turned and hit a dog that happened to be standing near, and it ran howling under the legs of a mule, and the hind legs of that long-eared animal began to fly around in lively style.

The result was that that brave officer got kicked into the middle of the street, and was taken back to the station house on a shutter.

The old darkey, still bewildered over the chain of events, turned and began walking on in the direction he was in when Tommy first spoke to him.

Our friends followed.

"Did you get paid for that job of whitewashing, uncle?" asked Tommy as he overtook him.

"Loramighty, boss, did you go fo' to see dat?"

"Oh, yes, I saw it all. Nice job."

"Dat war too bad, boss; only wish I had de money, I'd pay him fo' dem close, shuah."

"It wasn't your fault entirely. He had a right to look out for himself."

"Dat am so, boss. But chile, I's an ole man; kinder hobblin' 'long todes de graveyard, and shan't do much mo' whitewashin' in dis yere vale ob years, but, honey, I'd jist gib fourteen million ob dollars if I could jes see dat chap dat axed me what town dis yer war."

"What had that to do with it?"

"Wal, now, honey, don't yer done see dat it kinder scarred me like, an, I turn 'roun too quick, an' whach dat yer feller alongside de head wid dat yer whitewash. I's an ole man, chile, but I think I can get away wid dat chap, same's a gobbler go fo' a grass hopper."

"Not the slightest doubt of it, uncle. Well, here is a dollar towards making you lunk," said Tommy, handing it to him.

He concluded that the fun he had enjoyed was worth that much at least.

"Lor! bress yer, honey, I nebber 'spected that from a stranger."

"Oh, well, that's all right. Where do you live?"

"Down heah by de water."

"Tell me, for I may have a job for you to do before long," said Tommy, taking out a card and pencil.

The address was given, and they parted company.

with the old man who had furnished them so much fun.

They walked around the city until it was nearly dark, and then returned to the Tremont House for supper and a new start.

After supper they went to the bar-room for the purpose of getting the lay of the land and seeing the bar-keeper, whom they had fooled.

They found him with a group of fellows standing around, leaning or loafing on the bar and listening to the reading of Tommy's order, that he had had placed in a frame and hung over the bar for the amusement of his patrons.

"How's that for high?" he asked.

"Big. What awful airs," said one.

"He must have slept on a big dictionary the night before he wrote that."

"I'd like to see the chap, that's all."

"Why?"

"Oh, I only want to take off my hat to him, that's all. I'll open a bottle any time when he'll call around," said the barkeeper.

"Come on, Dovey. We'll make him keep his word before long," said Tommy, taking his friend's arm and walking out upon the brilliantly-lighted streets.

Chicago by gaslight.

Well, I haven't time to tell all about it this week, but in the next chapter we will see what was done in Chicago by "One of the Boys of New York."

CHAPTER XIII.

For a week or so Tommy Bounce and his companion, George Dovey, employed their time in becoming acquainted with Chicago, and the gay people of that rapid city.

Those who know our friends, will understand that they were not slow in getting at all there was to be seen and learned, and having some fun while doing so.

They made the acquaintance of several wide-awake young fellows, who introduced them into places where they probably would not have found their way unaided, and they also found that the Chicago boys were quite as gay in many respects as are the boys of New York.

But they had quite considerable fun at the Tremont House, were they were boarding, for there were several very funny people there, who made a deal of sport for the lads.

The reader will remember the highfaluten order which Tommy wrote to the barkeeper.

Well, that document was framed, and hung up in the bar-room, where it attracted much attention, and caused a great deal of fun.

Tommy afterward made the acquaintance of the barkeeper, and they became very good friends.

Boarding at the hotel was a queer old maid, very rich and exceedingly fussy.

Her room was on the same floor with Tommy's, and she often came to his door to ask if her "James" was there.

This James was a huge, lazy cat, which appeared to be the only thing in the world that she had the least affection for, and as James had a great habit of prowling whenever he could get a chance to do so, she had about so much worriment every day on his account.

Sometimes he would escape to the roof of the hotel, and there evade the curious old maid for hours at a time, and the servants managed to have some fun, and make some money out of her, as she was always ready to pay anyone who would return her pet when caught out of her room, and to insure its being out, they would assist it as often as they could get a chance to do so.

And "James" was quite a sociable cat also, and would sometimes visit the other boarders' rooms in quest of company.

It was one of these visits to Tommy's room that established a seemingly firm friendship between them, so that he would always scoot for our friend whenever he could get a chance.

This brought Miss Tuck to their room quite often, and established a sort of acquaintanceship between them, although Tommy would have given anything to have had a chance to play some trick on the fussy old creature who was a nuisance to everybody about the house, and only tolerated because of her wealth, and ability to pay a good round board bill every month.

One day she came to Tommy's door and rapped smartly.

"Dear Mr. Bounce!"

"What the deuce is the matter with the old mowing machine now, I wonder," said he, as he proceeded to open the door.

"Oh, dear, dear, Mr. Bounce," she exclaimed, wringing her hands.

"Are you ill, Miss Tuck? Dovey, bring that flask of brandy."

"No, no, Mr. Bounce, but Jimmy!"

"Is he sick?"

"Oh, dear, no; I almost wish he was."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, for then he would remain in my room."

"Has he gone visiting? Dovey, has "James" Tuck called on us this afternoon?" he asked, turning soberly to his roommate.

"I think not," replied Dovey.

"Oh, no, he is up on the roof, and I am so fearful that he will fall and kill himself."

"Is he subject to dizziness when traversing high altitudes?"

"I don't know, but I am so much alarmed."

"You do not think he has any suicidal intentions, do you?"

"I think a cat would be justified in committing

suicide if obliged to live with her," muttered Dovey to himself.

"Oh, how should I know? But will you be so kind as to go up the scuttle and see if he will come to you, I cannot find any of the servants, and I doubt if they could persuade him to come down even if they attempted, for James does not fancy servants much. If you will be so kind."

"Certainly," and Tommy went up to the roof to see if he could find the feline runaway.

There he found him sure enough, in company with another, and evidently much interested in the stories that each are telling; at all events they paid no attention to Tommy's call until he threw an empty bottle at them.

He finally secured James and sent him kiting down stairs as though nineteen bull dogs had been after him. But that fond and anxious mistress caught him in her arms and soothed his fears and coaxed the swelling out of his tail.

"Oh, Mr. Bounce, your kindness I never shall forget. You shall be rewarded for your great devotion to my pet," said she.

"Don't mention it Miss Tuck, but if I were you I would insist upon having that scuttle shut that leads to the roof. I could see that Jimmy was quite nervous at being up so high, for he was just on the point of getting dizzy and falling down to the pavement when I arrived."

"What an escape! Yes, if the landlord don't keep it shut, I will move."

Tommy only wished that he could prevent the landlord from shutting it somehow, but after congratulating her determination, he returned to his own room.

"I'll make that cat and that old maid sick if they don't keep away from me," said he.

"I don't wonder the cat wants to get away from her, for it must feel itself in fool's company all the while," replied Dovey.

The next evening after dinner, while they were seated in their room together smoking, the entry door being open, what should enter but the old maid's cat, followed by the strange one that Tommy had seen on the roof.

They marched in with an air that seemed to say: "Now, then, step right in here to the apartment of my friends, and let us have this little dispute of ours out."

"I say, Dovey, look here," said Tommy, "there is more fun in two cats than can be squeezed out in a month."

"That's so, come here Jimmy."

"Do you remember the fun we used to have with the cats at Andover?"

"Yes, yes. And the fun we used to have with almost everything there."

Dovey laughed as the memory of old times came up before him.

Tommy lost no time in making friends with the strange cat, and in a short time he had apparently settled all difference between them, and got them on good terms with each other.

By this time it was nearly dark, and as he was expecting every moment to hear Miss Tuck rapping at his door in quest of James, he at once proceeded to business.

Taking a strip of India-rubber he tied one end of it to Jimmy's hind-leg securely, and then passing the other end to Dovey, who held the strange cat in his lap, he proceeded to fasten it to the animal's hind-leg, in the same way as had been done with "James" Tuck, and the suspicions of neither feline was aroused.

"Now, then, we will let them spin through the hallway and see some fun," said Tommy.

They carried them carefully to the door and gave them a shove and a "scat" in opposite directions; but the rubber band brought them suddenly together again with a whack.

In an instant they clenched, and the way the fur did fly as the two cats rolled over and over was a caution; and such a yawling never startled innocent people before.

First one door and then another was opened, and anxious faces shoved out, and then everybody with courage enough shouted "scat! Of course Tommy and Dovey shouted with the rest.

Then the cats started to run away from each other, but of course the rubber band brought them back together again as before.

This time they were too much frightened to fight, for everybody was yelling, to say nothing of the bewilderment that the string caused them, so they both run together down the hall as though the very devil possessed them.

But they did not go more than a rod or so before they again got mad and stopped for another rough and tumble.

It was such high old fun, and Tommy and Dovey enjoyed it, you bet.

By this time Miss Tuck heard the noise, and instantly recognizing the voice of her James, she dashed out of her room as a mother might for the rescue of her child.

"Scat!" shouted a dozen voices.

"Pur-mew-spit-spit-way?" sang the contending cats.

"Jimmy! Jimmy! Jamesy, come here!" called Miss Tuck, pathetically.

But James had other business to attend to just then, and pretended he did not hear her. His back and blood was up, and he was having a regular treat; more fun, in fact, than he had enjoyed in a year.

But the heart of Miss Tuck was touched, and again she called.

Again the guests of the hotel shouted "scat!" and several of them threw old boots at the contestants. The servants came rushing to the scene, and guests occupying the floor above and below where the row was taking place, began to yell, and, taken altogether, there was a healthy row on foot.

"Mercy! Mercy! Save my James! Save my darling!" cried Miss Tuck, wringing her hands.

"Shoot him!" yelled somebody.

"Help! help! Will nobody rescue him?"

"Will nobody kill him?" asked a man who had been roused by the caterwauling.

This was just a straw too much for Miss Tuck. In an instant she understood that there was no friend of her cat present, and so she rushed boldly forward, and after considerable dodging this way and that, she at length caught her James and lifted him in her arms.

This was all well enough for "James," but how was it for the other cat!

When she lifted her cat, she of course drew up the other one by its legs, and then there was another howl and the rapid working of a set of claws.

Catching her dress with its claws the cat was on top of her, into her hair, and clawing all over her in less time than you could say "scat."

Then they both fought and scratched in the worst way, and screaming bloody murder, she threw them both down, losing her back hair by the operation, as the strange cat had one claw in it and James had another.

This put her out of the fight. She ran to her room as though fearful of her scalp's going next, while a wild cheer went up and the cats ran down stairs, tumbling bumpety-bump a part of the way, and taking turns at pulling each other the rest of the way until they came to the landing below, chased by a shower of missiles and a chorus of infuriated yells.

What the dickens it all meant nobody appeared to know, but everybody seemed to think that boots, brushes, bottles, and cakes of soap was good for them, and they donated them in showers.

A chambermaid went for them with a sweeping machine.

"Scat, ye bastes!" said she, when she saw them start to run away and then to all appearance jump at each other, tail first again, she got frightened and ran away.

"Howly mother, did yees moind that?" she asked Tommy who stood near watching the fun.

"What?"

"Why, sure, they did be buckin' at each odder, tail-fust."

"Well, that's the way some cats fight," replied Tommy.

"Is it?"

"Oh, yes. When one end gets tired they turn around and kick each other."

"Blessed Moses!" exclaimed the girl, evidently believing every word. "Faith, I think they are devils."

"I guess they are develish mad," said Tommy.

The cats were still fighting and pulling each other's hair, first one on top and then the other, and finally somebody threw a bowl of water over them.

Then they started again to run in different directions, but were of course suddenly pulled together again by the elastic.

The spectators began to see by this time what it was that made the felines stick together so lovingly, and understanding then that a joke had been played by some one, they set up a laugh that drowned the noise of the fight.

Miss Tuck had by this time repaired the displacement of her back hair, and again she flew to the rescue. But the cats had become so thoroughly frightened by this time that they could not be approached, and when she attempted to corner them, with the assistance of the chambermaid, they ran under her clothes, frightening her so that she threw up her feet and turned almost a backward flip-flap in her anxiety to get away.

Once more free they started and ran up-stairs like a streak of wet cat-fur, stopping once or twice to comb each other's hair, just to show their friendliness.

"Will somebody capture my James?" moaned Miss Tuck, covering herself and struggling to her perpendicular.

But no one appeared to be anxious to have anything to do with the matter, although a rush was made up-stairs after them, to see the fun most likely.

"Ten dollars to the one who rescues my poor James," said she, appealing to the servants.

"Oh, let 'em have it out," said a man, and Miss Tuck almost withered him with a look.

Three chambermaids and a porter came to separate the cats, and a lively time they had in doing it, for they got badly scratched, and the cats badly pounded.

But at length the elastic was cut, and, while the stranger was allowed to scoot for the roof, James was taken tenderly down to the rooms of his mistress, who followed behind ringing her hands and addressing the tenderest words of consolation to her pet.

But what a changed cat that was.

James went into the fight with a whole skin and a glossy coat, but he came out of it with about half his fur, and barely skin enough to grow that upon comfortably. One eye was closed for repairs, and being wet, looked ten times worse, so it is hardly to be wondered at that Miss Tuck was nearly broken-hearted, and at once sent for a doctor.

It was a good hour before that hotel got quieted down, the affair had created so much sport and excitement. The joke was told and explained; but who played it? that was the question. But as usual, our friend, Tommy Bounce, was never suspected, although the barkeeper had made up his mind that he had done it.

That night they went to the theater, and returned about twelve o'clock, perfectly satisfied with the fun they had enjoyed during the day, and quite ready to go to bed. About daylight they were awakened by an old fellow who roomed next to them, coming home, noisy and full of fight or fun, as the case might be.

He tried for a long time to worry his key into the lock on Tommy's door.

"Wassermasser wiz it, anyhow? Guess my key's swelled since morning," he muttered.

Tommy opened the door, and the man turned and stared at him.

"Do you wish to swap rooms, sir?" he asked at length.

"Swas—thunner! who be you, anyhow?"

"The next door is the one you pay to fondle," said Tommy, pointing toward it.

"Who do ye take me for, hic? S'pose I donno whasser whass?"

"I give it up. Good morning," said he, shutting his door.

"Wunner who zat was, anyhow, woman or man? Guess I mus' been drinking," he mused as he staggered toward his own door.

With considerable trouble, and after trying every key on his ring, from the watch-key up to the largest, he at last managed to get his door unlocked, and to get inside of it.

Nothing was heard of him that night, only his bully old snore, for he was playing on his bugle loudly.

The next morning Tommy was up quite early, and, on passing the door of the drunken man he saw that it was standing open, and the convivial cuss of the night before lay on the floor, with his clothes on, and his hat completely flattened down beneath his head.

"He's not dead, is he?" asked Dovey.

"Yes, dead drunk. But, I say, pard, we will have some fun with him."

"How?"

"Come with me."

They walked out together, as they usually did before breakfast. Going to the house of a physician near by, he rang the bell violently three or four times, while Dovey walked slowly along up the street.

Presently the doctor came down to the door only partially dressed.

"Quick doctor!"

"What? where?" demanded the doctor.

"Tremont House."

"What?"

"Man taken poison. Get your stomach pump, and go as quickly as possible. Here's the number of the room on this card. The man has been on a drunk and has taken laudanum or some other poison. But doctor, for heaven's sake, don't alarm the boarders or anybody in the hotel, for the man is well known, and it would hurt his feelings very much to have it become known. Understand?"

"Oh, yes, often have such cases as this, its the way some people have of finishing up a drunk. I'll just take my pump and bail him out so quick that he won't know it."

"Do so, doctor, and at once," said Tommy turning away to join his friend.

They took a short cut back to the hotel, and were soon secreted within their own room, and ready to listen to what should take place.

But they did not have to wait long before they heard a quick, nervous step approaching.

They listened and heard somebody enter the room, and close the door and lock it on the inside.

It was the stomach-pump man, and he was following instructions about keeping it to himself, by making sure that no one could come in and learn what was going on.

Fixing his apparatus with all speed, he stood astride of the prostrate victim; thrust the suction hose into his mouth, and began to work away for dear life.

Unless a man is either dead, or hopelessly and helplessly dead drunk, an operation of that kind would be pretty sure to awaken him, and it awakened this man.

His first impression was that he was in the lower regions, and that the devil was just on the point of sampling him. He would have yelled if his mouth had not been so full of nozzle, but as it was he began to struggle violently.

But the doctor was a powerful man, and finding that his patient was inclined to kick up a row and object to having his life saved, he proceeded to sit down upon him, still holding him between his legs, and pumping away like blazes.

The poor devil fought like a lion.

"Be quiet, I am going to pump that poison out of you in spite of the devil," said the doctor.

Mustering all his strength, the victim at length succeeded in wrenching himself away from that pump and while endeavoring to make a second connection the physician was thrown over backwards, knocking a table loaded with all kinds of trinkets over, and smashing thunder out of it.

"You blasted old idiot, what the devil are you trying to do with me?" demanded the man.

"I'm trying to save your life."

"Trying to save thunder! Get out of here or I'll pump your spine out with your bloody machine."

"No, sir, you must be saved!" said the doctor, jumping upon him.

Then followed a regular rough and tumble, knocking, gouging, yelling, kicking things over, and raising can generally. But the doctor was the strongest, and being bent not only on saving the man's life, but doing it in spite of him, he managed to get him down on his back again, he all the while shouting murder at the top of his lungs.

But this of course raised everybody in the house, and a policeman was summoned, and rushed up stairs, followed by servants, landlord, guests, and all hands, sure that a bloody tragedy was being enacted.

Just as the plucky doctor got the nozzle of his pump fairly crammed into his victim's throat again, the door was burst in and a grand rush made to the rescue.

The officer caught the doctor by the hair of his head, and pulled him over backwards while the man he was pumping out, leaped to his feet and wanted to kill him on the spot.

"What does all this mean?" demanded the landlord and officer at the same time.

"Hang me if I know, I lay here asleep, and the first thing I knew this bloody old pig was sitting on top of me with that blasted pump of his trying to pull me inside out," said the man.

"Why, officer, you know me," said the doctor.

"To be sure I do; but what does this mean?"

"Mean? Why this man has taken poison."

"Taken thunder. It's a lie!"

"I tell you it is not a lie, officer, and I call you to assist me in pumping it out of him. Quick! throw him on his back again."

"No, I'll be hanged if you do!" said he, springing to his bureau and taking a revolver from one of the drawers.

"See he's bound to die."

"No, I'm bound to live and kill you if you don't clear out of here with your old suction."

"How is this, Mr. Tray?" asked the landlord, approaching his boarder.

"How is it? Why, the man is crazy!"

"Haven't you taken any poison?"

"Of course not. What the devil do I want to take poison for?"

"Don't believe him. It's a determined suicide. Secure him," said the doctor.

"You had better secure a coffin before you attempt it," howled Tray.

"Who sent you, doctor?" asked the landlord.

"Why, a young man routed me out of bed not ten minutes ago, told me that a man in this room had taken poison, and ordered me to hurry here as speedily as possible to save his life, and to do so without allowing anybody to know it for fear of the scandal and publicity."

"Who was it?" asked the officer, looking at the crowd that had surged into the room.

But of course nobody knew.

"There must be a mistake somewhere," replied the landlord, "I know Mr. Tray very well and I don't believe anything about it."

"I found the door of his room open and he was lying there on the floor with his clothes on, and with every appearance of having taken poison. I guess I know my business."

"Well, I came home drunk last night, and probably forgot to close my door or to go to bed."

"I think I have heard of you doing such things before, Mr. Tray."

"I dare say; I'm no temperance apostle."

"Doctor, somebody has evidently played a joke on you," said the officer.

"By thunder! I think the joke has been played on me," said Tray, savagely.

A loud laugh rang through the hall, and convinced the trembling guests that the supposed tragedy had turned into a farce.

The doctor looked foolishly from one to the other of the party, and then taking up his pump and his badly-smashed hat, he started for the door amid a general laugh.

"I'd like to meet that young fellow came for me; I'd perform an operation on him for nothing," said the doctor, forcing his way through the crowd out into the hall.

The news of that sell flew from mouth to mouth, and before noon was all over the city, causing the greatest merriment everywhere.

But Tommy Bounce laid very low for a few days afterwards, and took good care not to be seen in the vicinity of that sold doctor's residence.

He didn't want any operation performed for nothing.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE reader will remember the doctor with his stomach pump, and the sport which Tommy Bounce and his companion, Dovey, had at the expense of the drunken man at the hotel.

Well, the fun which grew out of that affair, and the laughs it occasioned were wonderful.

Wherever the victim of the joke went, he found that the story had preceded him, and everybody was on a broad grin at his expense.

And maybe he wasn't mad; oh, no!

He swore that he would find out who it was who played the joke on him, or perish in the attempt, and as he set about it in a very savage manner, and the landlord was not only a sympathizer with him, but even went so far as to insinuate to several that he thought Tommy was the culprit, Tommy began to conclude that the Tremont House was getting a trifle too warm for comfort.

So, with the same sober faces that they had carried ever since the affair, they settled their bill, gave out that they were going to St. Louis, and changed quarters, going to the Palmer House, for two reasons: one to keep out of harm's way, and the other to enjoy a change of scene.

But they continued to enjoy the fun, as they heard the story told and re-told almost everywhere, while still unknown as the authors of it.

The conduct of the landlord, however, made Tommy very mad, for, apparently only to keep in with his boarder, he openly accused Tommy of the trick after he left his hotel, as he had insinuated it before, so he secretly resolved to play something for his benefit.

As yet Tommy had done nothing in the way of business since he had been in Chicago, for, to tell the truth, there was so much to see and be enjoyed in this gay, delightful city, that thoughts of business followed slow.

He was bound to have his holiday first and let the business come in afterwards.

One day, while he and Dovey were walking along Milwaukee Avenue, who should they meet but the same old darkey who spilled the whitewash over the dandy (the reader will remember the fun of that racket), and created such a wild sensation only a few days before.

The old fellow was walking along in the same way as he was then, with a long brush handle on his shoulder, at one end of which was a pail of whitewash.

"Hello, pop," said Tommy, "how you was?"

"Bress my stars. Am dat you, honey?" exclaimed the old man, while a grin of delighted recognition mantled his black face.

"Oh, yes. Out after a job?"

"Yas, honey. I's out a lookin'."

"Plenty of work?"

"Plenty! Bress yer good heart, boss, dar amn't work 'nough in dis yer Chicago ter keep a yaller dorg scratching."

"Times are very dull I know, but of course you have your regular customers."

"Yas, boss, day're reg'lar when dey hab anything fo' to do. But I's tellin' on ye, boss, times is mighty rum-bunctious. Hea I's been goin' 'round all day, a lookin' an' a lookin' fo' wok, an' I habn't got so much as a hen-coop ter whitewash. Shua!"

"That is rather rough. Can we do anything for him, Mr. Shearman?" said he, turning to Dovey in a business-like way.

"Well, Mr. Palmer, I don't think of anything just now, unless we get our sheds down on the dock whitewashed," replied Dovey.

"Wo'k mighty cheap now, boss."

"What do you say to having the sidewalk in front of the Tremont House whitewashed," he continued, without noticing the remark of the darkey.

"We ought to have it done, of course, but how can we arrange it?"

"I'll tell you, for I feel interested in this man, and would like to help him along. He can have his whitewash all mixed and put it on to-night after twelve o'clock, say, after the travel of the day is over."

"Yes, that could be done," said Dovey, quietly.

"Well, I'll tell you what, pop; you know where the Tremont House is?" said Tommy.

"Sartin' sah."

"And you know the sidewalk in front of it?"

"Shua."

"Now how much will you tax us to give that one good coat of whitewash?"

The old darkey threw himself into a sober calculating mode.

"Understand, it must be done to-night after twelve o'clock, and after people are off the street, otherwise it would get tracked."

"Yes, sah. Want de whole sidewalk whitened?"

"Yes, to preserve it, you know."

"Oh yes, boss. Dis here lime is a great preserve ob things in dis yer world."

"Yes, and you must whitewash everything you find between the house and curbstone."

The old fellow was scratching his head and trying to get at the cost of the job.

"What do you say?"

"Wall, boss, I reckon that it can be done fo' about five dollars."

"Well, that is reasonable. Now here's your money," said he, astonishing him with a five dollar note. "Now go and get your whitewash mixed, and be all ready to sail down upon it at twelve o'clock. Understand?"

"Oh, sartin shua, boss," said the delighted old coon, almost ready to dance.

"But here is one thing I wish you to understand."

"Yas, boss."

"The landlord may object, but if he does, you tell him that you get your instructions from the owners, and that you want none of his nonsense. Do you understand?"

"Oh yes, boss."

"Don't you allow anybody to stop you. We know our business, and wont allow any person to interfere or dictate to us. Now, then, are you all right?"

"All right, boss."

"And you won't allow anyone to molest you."

"Boss, I's nasty when people fools wid me, I is."

"Good!"

"I's a po'r man, but I don't 'low no foolin' wid me when I's tendin' ter business."

"All right. Remember then that you want to be all ready, and jump into it just as quick as people get off the street."

"Sartin; an' I'll go an' get Eb Jones fo' to help me. He can sling witewash nigh unto as good as I ken, an' we will do it up in 'bout half an hour."

"That's right; the quicker the better. But be careful and don't say anything about it until you get right down to the work, for the landlqrd might try to make a muss."

"Me an' Eb'll muss him if he comes foolin' round whar we are."

"All right, good-bye," said Tommy, as he took Dovey's arm and walked along.

The old darkey watched them until they were lost in the crowd, and then turned and walked in the direction he was going when our friends encountered him. But he was the happiest darkey in Chicago at all odds, and as he walked along he interviewed himself thus:

"Guess der wolf hab got no business comin' round my door." Five dollars fo' half an hour's work! Goshermighty! Now, I know'd when I dream las' night 'bout cuttin' dat watermelon dat I was gwine fo' ter hab some good luck, an' now I'll go right away an' play 17-55. De 17 is fo' de day ob de monf, an' de 55 is my age. Dem numbers shure fo' ter win. I'll play a dollar on dem dar two numbers so quick dat it will make dat policy dealer's head swim," and away he headed for the nearest policy shop, where he proceeded to play 17-55 with a flourish, and while I am about it I may as well say that he won ten dollars on it in the next day's drawing.

Leaving the old darkey to make preparations for fulfilling his contract at midnight, let us follow our heroes and see what other deviltry they are up to, for of course they are at something.

After leaving the old artist in whitewash, they walked along for some time, and finally brought up on one of the numerous steamboat wharves, where the bustle and business of the city really begins.

Here they found much to awaken their curiosity and amusement, for there was all kinds and conditions of people there, from the millionaire to the shabbiest tramp.

Sailors, longshoremen, roustabouts, captains, clerks, peddlers, and goodness only knows who were not there, all busily engaged at something.

At a steamboat landing they found several passengers waiting for the boat to arrive, and as it was in a cool place, Tommy and Dovey took a seat and resolved to look on while they rested.

It was an animated scene, and quite unlike anything they had ever beheld, either in New York, or Boston, and for that reason they became much interested in it. Vessels were loading and unloading, elevators were pouring streams of golden grain into or taking it from lighters; drays were loading or unloading; business men were hurrying here and there; teamsters were shouting; tug boats puffing and sputtering along likeimps of darkness, and on all sides a scene of animation was visible.

Sitting next to Tommy on the seat was an old, hard-featured woman, armed with a huge umbrella, and surrounded with half a dozen handboxes and parcels, whose husband they had met just before taking a seat under the shed, and he had asked them to be directed to the nearest saloon where he could get a nip of the good stuff to help kill the hour-and-a-half that he had got to wait before the boat arrived.

Tommy directed him correctly, strange as it may seem, not feeling just then like indulging in a joke or sell.

But he soon noticed that his wife began to get very nervous at her husband's absence. Finally she turned to our hero.

"Where on airth do you 'spect my husband's gone?"

"I give it up, madam," said he, politely.

"Yer what?" she asked, looking at him sharply.

"I cannot tell, madam, I met him just outside here, and he asked me the way to a first class hotel."

"A hotel?" she almost screamed.

"A hotel. But, I trust you will not follow him."

"What on airth do you mean, young chap?"

"Well, well, these little domestic differences will spring up in the best regulated families."

"Blast yer, yer little starched-up runt, what are ye drivin' at? what difficulties?" she demanded, with great vehemence.

"Well, you live unhappily together, don't you?"

"Great corn, no! What der yer mean?"

"He asked to be directed to a hotel, and said he was going to shake that old mushy wife of his and see if he couldn't get a girl that looked more like a lady," said Tommy, looking honest.

"Great snakes! did he say that?" she screamed, leaping to her feet and raising her umbrella aloft.

"He intimated that he was tired of you, and that he was going to try his luck with a younger and better looking woman."

"Oh, the rascal! Where is he? where is he?" she howled, starting away.

"He walked up that way."

"Wants ter get a young woman, does he?"

Tommy bowed and the wrathful old woman performed a war-dance on the wharf.

"Got tired of his lawful wife, has he?"

"It would seem so. Men often do that."

"Yes, in this pesky Chicago, gol-darn the place. It serves me right for me 'lowing him to come here."

"But of course you must have known that he has not lived happily with you."

"I'll happily him. I say, young chap, will you kinder look arter my traps, here, while I go an' bring him to his senses?"

"Oh, certainly. Anything that I can do to assist a lady in distress I am always ready to do."

"All right," and away she straddled up the wharf in the direction her husband had taken.

"Now it would be healthy for us to get out of here," said Dovey.

"You bet."

"Let's git."

They walked up the next wharf where some sailors were entertaining a crowd of loungers with the antics of the ship's monkey, a pet that had been learned all sorts of tricks, and who accompanied one of them whenever he went on shore.

Tommy was especially taken with the animal, and bantered the sailor to buy it. But it was not for sale at any price.

Tommy and the monkey became good friends, however, and he fed him with some dainties which he purchased near by, and was enjoying the little fellow's antics very much.

The old woman who had gone in quest of her husband happened to spy him standing in the door of the saloon after having partaken of his "nip" and was innocently watching the animated scene before him.

She rushed up to him like a tigress, wildly flourishing her umbrella.

"So you're on the look out for her, be you?" said she, fiercely.

"What's that, Molly?" he asked in surprise.

"Don't dare to Molly me, Josiah Partridge!" she said, shaking her folded awning in his face.

"What's the matter I'd like ter know?"

"Pretty doings these be for an old married rooster like you."

"Are you crazy, Molly Partridge?"

"Oh, yer awful innocent, arn't you? Want ter get a younger woman, do you? Got tired of yer old mushy wife, have you?"

"Gr. it snakes, Molly, what ails you? Are you ravin' crazy? I'd like ter ask?"

"An' thort as how you'd slip away from me an' see

'f you couldn't get a better lookin' one, did you? Oh, I've found yu out, yu good-for-nothin' old moose you. Now, you march back agin tu your seat, an' when we get home I'll show you whether I'm mushy or not."

"Molly Partridge, you're a fool," said the old man, turning away as though to avoid her.

"I am, am I?" said she, caving his hat in with her umbrella. "I'm a fool, am I? Yes, a darned fool for marrying you!"

"What do you mean?" he asked, savagely, seizing her weapon.

"Didn't you just tell a young chap as how you war a goin' for to shake me?"

"No."

"An' go for a younger woman?"

"No; never told anybody such a thing. I only asked a young chap where I could get a good drink of whisky cheap, an' he sent me over here."

"Dare you come back an' face him?"

"Yes; face a whole army of 'em."

"Then come an' du it," said she, turning, and leading the way back to the wharf.

The husband followed, straightening out his old battered hat as best he could, and wondering what in thunder it all meant.

On arriving at the shed she found her boxes and bundles, but the honest-looking youth who had got her on such a string, was nowhere to be found; but she was determined to find him, for her blood was up, and she understood that she had been badly fooled.

"Blast his starched picter; I'll fix him!" said she, starting off.

"Oh, don't mind it, Molly," said her husband.

"Don't mind it! What! arter he has made such a fool of me? I guess yes. I'll show him what it is to fool a decent woman, an' if you had the spunk of a louse you'd come along an' help me find him an' wollop him inter an inch of his life."

"Don't go, Molly, the steamboat will be here pretty quick," said he, following her.

"Darn the steamboat! I'd sooner stay in this ere wicked city another day than miss a gettin' in on that young rascal."

He followed beseechingly, but it was no use. There was blood in her eye, and she fastened it on every one she met as she started up the wharf in quest of Tommy Bounce.

She looked around for some time, and finally seeing the crowd gathered around the sailors who was amusing it with the monkey, and towards it she put with a quick, angry stride.

She elbowed her way into the crowd, looking with angry inquiry into every face, and finally espying Tommy standing near the sailors, she went for him with her umbrella.

"Here, you darned little liar!" she yelled, banging him over the head with her umbrella. Fool me, will ye! ye will, hey?" and again she whacked him over the head.

Just then, the monkey, who had taken a great fancy to Tommy, leaped upon his shoulders, and from there to the old woman's head, where he played the mischief with her bonnet in less time than it takes to write it.

The old woman howled with fright, and the crowd yelled with delight.

"Take it off! Take off yer dorg;" she screamed.

The crowd yelled again, and it required considerable strength on the part of the sailor to get him away, and he brought away the remnants of her bonnet, and a portion of her false hair, when he did so.

"Oh, my gracious, where's the police? where be they?" she yelled.

"Molly, the boat's comin'," shouted her husband, who just then came up.

"Darn the boat; I want the police!"

"What's the matter, Molly?" he asked, seeing her condition for the first time.

"This man set his dorg on mo. What's the police?"

The loud laugh and the rapidly increasing crowd enabled Tommy and Dovey to make their escape, and it may well be believed that they were not long about it either.

How the affair ever ended they never learned, but they had a good laugh over it, and returned at once to their hotel.

In the evening they went to the theater and enjoyed themselves first rate, and as midnight approached they started towards the Tremont House to be on hand for the whitewashing.

They loafed around at a safe distance, and at about twelve o'clock they saw the two darkies approach with a large tub of whitewash between them, and set it down on the walk in front of the hotel.

As they had calculated, there were but a few people abroad, and the two lime artists at once peeled themselves for the work.

They went at it with a will, and finally a crowd began to collect. The novelty of whitewashing a sidewalk was quite enough to attract a crowd almost anywhere.

Innumerable were the questions that were put to them respecting the object of the whitening, but they gave no direct answer, save that they were following the instructions of the owners who were anxious to preserve the walk.

Then there was a laugh, and presently the people in the hotel came out to see what it was all about, and excitement began to run high.

But before the landlord could get dressed and come out, the job had been completed and the artists had moved away.

To say that that landlord was surprised would be putting it altogether too mildly. He was completely confounded, and an officer was at once dispatched to overtake the fellows who had done the job.

With but little trouble they captured and brought them back to the scene of the spread.

"What the devil have you been about here?" commanded the landlord.

"Been a whartwashin', sah," replied the contractor.

"But what in the dickens do you mean by it?"

"Mean fo' to do it, sah."

"Of course; but what did you do it for?"

"Fo' de owner, sah."

"Go to thnnder! I own this property, myself," cried the landlord, indignantly.

"Can't play none ob dem yer roots on dis chile, boss," said the darkey, shaking his head.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that I was hired by a man dat say he war de owner ob dis yer property, ter whartwash dis yer sidewalk. He gub me five dollars fo' doin' it, an' I hab earned my money."

"It's a cussed humbug, you old ace of spades!"

"Dar warn't no humbug 'bout de five dollars dat he gub me," said he, grinning.

"There is a trick here," said the officer. "What kind of a looking man was it that hired you?"

"A young, nice looking man."

"It's a devilish outrage."

"Taint my fault, boss, if it am."

"I'm not so sure about that."

"Taint likely dat a poo' young man like me is a gwine fo' ter do such a job as dis yer for fun."

"I don't see much fun in it," said the landlord.

"Shall I take them in?" asked the officer.

"No, if they have been fooled, I don't see why they should suffer. But I'll give you fifty dollars if you find out the man that employed you."

"I say, Tommy, hadn't we better be getting out of Chicago?" asked Dovey, as he heard this.

"Wal, boss, I'll do my best."

"Take his address, officer, and I'll inquire about it more to-morrow."

The whitewasher furnished his address, after which they were allowed to go home. But the crowd did not diminish in the least, for everybody that came along stopped to see the curious sight of a sidewalk whitewashed, and the result was that the bar of the house did a thriving business by the curious ones who went in to inquire about it.

The next morning it looked even whiter than it did under gas-light, and attracted a large crowd, and made more money for the bar. But the landlord set his men to work with water and scrubbing brooms to obliterate the glaring joke, and grew madder every moment when he found that it could not be done.

He fumed around all the next day, trying to get some clue to the mystery, and the papers made laughable squibs about it, and everything tended to keep up the excitement.

It was generally admitted that a huge practical joke had been perpetrated on the landlord, or an old score paid off by somebody, but who it could be no one seemed able to tell.

But the victim of the stomach pump came to the conclusion that the joke had been played by the same fellow who had served him such a trick, and the landlord finally believed as he did, and set about trying to get on Tommy's track.

Tommy and his friend consulted, and it was resolved to get away from Chicago without loss of time.

"But where shall we go?" asked Dovey.

"Oh, anywhere. How about St. Louis?"

"I'm agreed."

"All right. Let us see when the next train leaves, and be sure that we get it."

Dovey at once flew to packing up his trunk.

"I guess they will remember us here in Chicago for a while, if we do tear ourselves away."

"You bet. But how about business?"

"Well, we will let that go until we return. The landlord's wrath will go down after a bit."

"Not while that whitewashed sidewalk stares him in the face."

"Well, never mind. Away we go in search of adventure elsewhere."

CHAPTER XV.

THE reader will recollect how Tommy Bounce and his friend waltzed out of Chicago on account of their larks there, and now, to continue, let us follow them on board the train, bound for St. Louis, over the Central road.

They were comfortably bestowed in a drawing-room, car, and lay back to enjoy the ride, as they enjoyed everything.

"It will not do to stay too long in a place," mused Dovey, while waiting for the train to start.

"No, not if we are going to have any fun," replied Tommy.

"But one thing is certain, we have had more fun in Chicago than anywhere we have been yet."

"That's so, Dovey. But I am not sorry we are going away, for there are so many places that I want to visit yet. Besides, Uncle Eben will begin to think I have given up business entirely if I don't send back some orders pretty soon."

"Well, you can jump right into business when we get to St. Louis, and then we can have our fun afterwards."

"Yes, I must do so, or the old gent will take it into his head to cut off supplies and send for me to return before I have seen half I wish to. From St. Louis we will go west a few hundred miles as the land may lay brightest, then we will go to Salt Lake City and call on Brother Brigham Young, and from there to San Francisco."

"But are we not going to have a little sport on the plains, hunting Indians?"

Tommy took off his hat and felt of his scalp.

"Well, yes, perhaps," said he.

"To be sure; it will be glorious fun."

"Fun!"

"Why, yes. A western trip wouldn't amount to a row of rusty pins without hunting Indians."

"Yes, but suppose they hunt us?"

Dovey laughed.

"It wouldn't be so funny, then, would it?"

"Probably not."

"This hunting Indians I fancy is not in reality what novelists make it out to be, and many a fellow with his hair grown on as tightly as ours is, has attempted to 'hunt' Indians and left his hair with them."

"That may be. But I don't fancy any danger."

"No, neither did they. This business of going out on the plains to hunt Indians reminds me of the story I once heard of the great tragedian, Edwin Forrest."

"He was playing in Boston, and at the theater there was a very pompous utility man, one of those great artists who are made to do almost anything, from the 'heav' business' of lugging off dead bodies, chairs and tables, to coming on with the announcement of 'My lord, the carriage waits.'"

"Yes, I have often seen them, and the boys generally give them a guy."

"Applause, they call it. Well, this fellow imagined that he was second only to Forrest, and during the day he would strut about the city, visiting saloons and showing himself to the poor groundings, and boast that he was supporting Forrest. When Forrest played Damon and Pythias this chap was cast Damon's servant, the one who slays his horse to prevent him from getting back to relieve his friend Pythias, who will be executed in his stead if he does not return. After rehearsal he went around among his friends and had a great deal to say about supporting Forrest. One of his acquaintances met him in a saloon and asked him what he was doing?"

"Doing? Where have you been all your life?" he asked, with contempt. "Why, I am playing with Forrest."

"The deuce you are! Playing with Forrest," said the man in assumed surprise.

"Yes, sir, playing with Forrest."

"Well, if you remember, Damon seizes this servant when he finds that he has slain his horse, and uses him about the same as a cat uses a mouse, Forrest was terrible in the part, and when the fellow came on and acknowledged what he had done, he seized him as you would grab a rag baby, and after shaking the stuffing nearly out of him, flung him off the stage and he landed among a lot of traps, doubled up like a wrecked hencoop."

"It nearly killed the poor devil, and meeting his friend the next day, with his arm in a sling and his face looking like a railroad map with the strips of court-plaster that the doctor had put on, the friend could hardly keep from laughing in his face, for he had been in front the evening before and seen it all."

"So you are playing with Forrest, are you?"

"Playing thunder!" growled the bad actor. "No, by gad, Forrest is playing with me," he added, as he turned and limped away."

"Devilish good?" said Dovey, laughing.

"Yes, and it applies to this hunting Indians. If we started out to hunt Indians and came back without our scalps, it might be justly said that the Indians hunted us."

"That's so. But I feel like chancing it."

Just then a fussy old fellow came bustling into the car, evidently very anxious about something. The first warning signal had been given, and he was all uncertain as to whether he was in the right car or not.

"Say, young rooster," said he, addressing Tommy, "whar du these yer keers go to?"

"To Portland, Maine," replied Tommy, looking up honestly at him.

"Great spunes!" he exclaimed, making a dive for the car-door. "That durned fule of a brakeman told me how they were bound for Saint Lewy."

As he bounced out he rushed against an old Irish woman with a basket of oranges, knocking her over backwards upon the platform where she landed squarely upon her stock in trade, making the juice fly out of them in all directions.

"Git out, or I'll get left by the keers!" he yelled.

And that indignant Irish woman yelled as she sat down on her shop, and she yelled as she leaped to her feet and went for that careless countryman.

"Bad manners ter ye, ye haythenish blackguard," she cried, as she grabbed into his long hair and pulled him over backwards.

"Murder! murder!" he shouted.

"I'll give ye murther, ye bloody ould long-legged idiot," and she gave it to him good, hitting him a dozen blows before he could recover himself sufficiently to offer any resistance.

Then he grabbed her and over they tumbled upon the oranges, those that the gamins had not stolen, both of them shouting, cursing, pounding and chawing, and rolling over the platform like a pair of cats.

Of course a crowd gathered instantly, and two brakemen pulled them apart.

"Oh, ye spalpeen! Oh, ye straddlebug!" she yelled, still shaking her fist at him.

"Git out, ye durned old catamount," said he.

"I ave me at him!"

"Hush, May; what's the riot?" asked the brakeman who held her.

"Matter! look at my oranges, sure!" said she, pointing to her mashed stock in trade.

"Who did it?"

"That spalpeen."

"Pay her for her oranges," said the brakeman.

"Darn her oranges!"

"Do, or be gob, I'll take it out o' yer hide," put in the old woman.

"Wal, how much?" he said, at length.

"A dollar."

"Here's yer durned dollar," said he, handing her the money doggedly. "Now, you Mister, what in thunder

made yer tell me these ere keers went to Saint Lewy?" said he, turning upon the brakeman.

"Well, so they do go to St. Louis."

"Git out! what you want to fule a stranger for? A chap in there said as how they wor a goin' to Portland, Maine."

Tommy and Dovey were taking it all in, and laughing ready to split.

"Oh, wipe off your chin and get aboard," said the brakeman, turning away disgusted.

"Git thunder! what der I want of a board?"

"Get on that car now right away or you will be left."

"An' that's just what I want ter be if they ain't a goin' to Saint Lewy."

"Oh, go to the devil, then."

"All aboard!" shouted the conductor, coming along just then.

"Say, yu, be yu the boss o' these keers?"

"Yes sir, what is it?"

"Wal, du they go to Saint Lewy?"

"Yes sir, get right aboard for we are off now in ten seconds."

"Great spunes!" muttered the old fellow, as he scrambled upon the car again. "I wonder what that are chap meant by telling me that they went to Portland, Maine? Darn his pacter, I'll jis find out, so I will, cost me a whole dollar besides a darned lickin'. Great spunes! but can't that Irisher fight, though?" he muttered, wiping his bleeding nose as he struggled into the car.

As if luck would have it, there was a vacant seat close by where Tommy and Dovey were sitting, and into it the old fellow chucked his carpet bag, then turning upon Tommy, he said:

"Young man, do I look nartral?"

"Well, sir, I am not able to say whether you look natural or not. It most likely depends upon what character you are made up for," said Tommy, as cool as a hen-house.

"Git out! What do you mean, anyhow?"

"You asked me if you looked natural. How should I know? Why not consult the mirror at the further end of the car?"

"Oh, that be gol darned! I know I don't look a bit nartral?"

"Ah, that settles it, then!"

"An' why don't I look nartral?"

"I give it up, sir."

"What's that?" he asked, pausing with the wiping of his nose.

"I never was worth a cent at conundrums."

"Oh, pshaw, I don't mean that at all."

"Are you positive that you know what you do mean?"

"Yes, I be; I'll tell you why I don't look a durn bit nartral. Yer thort as how yer'd be darned smart, an' told me as how these keers war goin' ter take folks ter Portland, Maine, an' sent me out ter tumble over a darned old Irish peddler, an' she liketer have clawed the meat all off o' me."

"Oh, she went for you, did she?"

"Great gosh!" he exclaimed.

"Well, sir, I am at a loss to understand why I am to blame because you tumbled over a peddler and got thrashed for it."

"But didn't you tell me these keers didn't go to Saint Lewy?"

"No, sir."

"Great spunes! what a cheek!"

"Nothing of the kind. You asked me where these cars would take you to, and I told you to Portland, Maine, and so they will, although you may have to go to St. Louis and perhaps San Francisco first."

"Don't you understand, old man? You can go to Portland by a roundabout road," said Dovey.

"Great cracked jugs!" he growled.

"It is a fact; therefore I told you no lie."

"Great cracked jugs! Young rooster, you're too durned smart to live long," said he, trying to steady himself by a seat, for the cars were now in motion.

At this point the conductor came along, and seeing the old fellow wiping at his nose, he directed him to the wash-room at the end of the car, and muttering as he balanced and straddled along, he at length disappeared into the closet.

But his troubles were only just fairly under way, for being long, gawky and ungainly, he stooped over the wash-bowl to wash his face, and the motion of the car gave him a lurch, and he stuck his head into the mirror above the bowl, smashing it into hundreds of pieces, and attracting the brakeman to the spot.

"Do you know what you are? You are one cussed old nuisance!" said he.

"Wal, I don't know but you're 'bout right. Seems ter me the very old scratch is on my track, and all on account of that durned smart chap in there, who made me believe the keers warn't goin' ter Saint Lewy."

"Oh, go shoot yourself!" replied the brakeman gathering up the pieces of glass. "That'll cost you a clean twenty."

"Twenty cents?"

"Twenty dollars."

"Great yams!"

"Fact."

"Twenty dollars?"

"Not a cent less."

"Why, I wouldn't give that for the whole durned keers."

"All right; I'll send the conductor after you," said he, leaving the car.

"Great spunes! I wish I'd stayed at hum in Beeswaxville. Nothin' but trouble an' bother all the while. Twenty dollars! What would Nancy say?"

He finished washing his face, and managed to stop the flow of blood, but the more he thought of the bad

luck he was having, the madder he got, and the more he wanted to fight somebody.

While he was thus engaged, a man came into the car from the one behind it, and seeing the old chap's carpet-bag occupying the only chair there was vacant, he took it out and quietly placed it on the floor by the side of an old fellow who was sleeping in his seat, and proceeded to appropriate the chair himself.

It was not a great while before the owner of the bag made his appearance, and went wabbling through the aisle towards it. He stopped to give Tommy a parting salute, however.

"Wal, Mister Smarty, du you know what I'd like ter du ter you?"

"Not kiss me, I trust?" said Tommy, honestly.

"Kiss the devil!"

"I should prefer to have you."

"I'd like to kiss you with my bute!"

Tommy glanced down at his "number sixteens."

"Well, my dear sir, I think I should rather have a mule kick me."

"Yer bet you would."

"I am sorry that I cannot gratify your kindly desires regarding me; but I don't want to get roused to-day."

"Roused?"

"Yes; I'm bad when I'm roused. I haven't killed a man now for more than a week, and if I'm left alone I may outgrow the habit altogether."

"Don't mind him, Mr. Slasher," said Dovey, as though trying to pacify Tommy; and then, turning to the astonished man, he said:

"If you don't wish to get killed, you had better go away and leave him alone. He is armed, and is nasty when he gets mad."

"Oh, fudge," said the countryman, as though not exactly certain what to say.

"Never mind," said Tommy, drawing a revolver from his pocket, "I may as well kill him as not; he will only be one more."

They glanced up, but the countryman was not there. He was streaking it down the aisle, banging against first one passenger and then another, and followed by a running fire of curses as he went.

When he came to where his carpet-bag was reposing against the old fellow's chair, he stopped, and grew indignant.

"Gosh, all hemlock! I wonder if a passenger has got any rights on this ere railroad, anyway? Say, yer stranger," he said, shaking the old man roughly by the shoulder.

"Ho!—ah! What's the matter?" he asked, rousing from his sleep.

"You've got my seat."

"Got thunder!"

"No; but you'll get thunder if you don't get up an' dust out o' this right lively."

"Go to the devil. This isn't your seat."

"Yes, 'tis, gol dern you. S'pose I don't know a seat?"

"I don't suppose you know anything. Go 'way!"

"Stranger, don't pile it on."

"Go 'way, I tell you. This seat does not belong to you!"

"Yes, it does. That's my carpet-bag a settin' right down here by it."

The gentleman looked down at the rusty old haversack.

"Well, I don't know anything about your old stow-away. I was the first person in this car before we left Chicago, that I know, and if you got it ahead of me you must have taken it yesterday."

"Put him out!" shouted somebody.

"Fire him out of the window!"

"The bloody old nuisance!"

"Shoot him!"

"Dry up!"

"Wipe your chin!"

"Stroke your beaver!" and other calls came from the indignant passengers: Tommy and Dovey being not a bit backward.

The old fellow was startled.

"Gosh, all hemlock! Everything I du ter day I put my foot inter it."

"Well, you are doing some big jobs then!" said the old gentleman, glancing at his big feet; "but it is quite evident that you could put your foot into one thing that would please the passengers in this car very much."

"What's that?"

"Put it into the next car."

"Oh, thunder! Here, Mr. Conductor," said he, hailing the taker-up of pasteboard, who was at that moment approaching, "come here and settle this little muss."

"What is the trouble with you now?"

He went to work and explained all about how he had placed his bag on a seat to secure it, and that this man had taken it while he was in the wash-room.

"It's nothing of the kind, conductor," said the gentleman, and half a dozen others confirmed what he had said.

"You are an old nuisance," said the conductor, turning to the unfortunate man.

"Wal, by gosh, I begin to think as how that's some thing wrong somewhere."

"Yes, that's so. Now you gather up, and go into the next car ahead, and there you will find a seat."

"Wal, stop the keers."

"Nonsense! Go right through the door, across the platform, and get into the next car."

"No danger?"

"No, if you have as much brains as a goat."

"Wal, I guess I arn't got much more," said he, picking up his old bag and starting. "But I'll be horn-swaggled if ever I seen such doin's!"

As before, he went waddling along the aisle, grabbing at first one seat and then another, slamming his old

valise into people's faces, and developing bad temper enough to break up a camp meeting.

But on arriving at the door and opening it, the brakeman con rorted him.

"Go back, you old galoot! What the devil are you coming out here for—to break your neck?"

"I'm going into that other keer."

"No, you arn't. Go in and sit down, or I will lock you up in the water-closet."

"But the conductor told me tu."

"Oh, go shoot yourself. Get back!" and pushing him back roughly, he closed the door.

But the conductor soon came to his rescue, and piloted him into the other car, where he found a seat, and gladly got into it. He was certainly a persecuted passenger, but he was naturally a nuisance and no one could have sympathy for him.

After the old fellow had been put out of the way, the passengers became quiet again, and many of them dozed off to sleep with the lolling motion of the car as it thundered along through a tract of the finest farming country in the world.

Our friends watched the beautiful and ever-changing scenery, but gradually grew weary of even this after having ridden a hundred miles or so.

Presently at one of the stations, a queer character got on, the "Chicago Soap man," a person well known all through the West. He travels mostly on the different railroads, and being possessed of a large amount of gab and blarney, he manages to sell a great deal of his toilet soap.

"Here you see me, ladies and gentlemen, the great Chicago Soap Man," he began, before the train started; "the man who never told a lie; who has sold millions of this toilet soap all over the country, and can look everybody in the face who ever used it."

"Not the slightest doubt of that," said Tommy. "He has cheek enough for anything."

"Now, then, only twenty-five cents for a cake of this beautiful soap, warranted to make a good lather for shaving; to remove freckles, eruptions, warts, corns, and will not make your eyes smart if you chance to get a little of it into them."

Just then the cars started up, and having got in his little introductory speech, he proceeded to go around among the passengers, many of whom bought a cake just to hear him run on, and the many stories he would tell.

Coming to where Tommy and Dovey were seated, he paused to trade with them.

"Now then, young men, I have an article here that will prove a great blessing to you both, inasmuch as it will stimulate a growth of beard in a few days that will astonish both yourselves and your friends, and make you able to captivate the hearts of all the ladies with whom you come in contact. Only twenty-five cents, and one cake of it will last you a month, washing off freckles, blotches, moles, corns, bunions, warts, and all the ills that flesh is heir to, besides raising hair enough in the meantime to make a mattress. Take a cake?"

Tommy looked up at him and began to talk with deaf and dumb signs to him, as did Dovey.

"Oh, thunder! Here I've been wasting all this eloquence on a pair of deaf and dumb 'uns. Bah!" and he turned away thoroughly disgusted, to try his luck on the next one.

"Now for some fun," whispered Tommy; "I wonder if I can work my ventriloquism in this confounded noise?"

"Perhaps so. Try."

"All right."

The great soap man was spinning his yarn to the man just behind them, but he was inclined to take no notice of him, making no reply, although Tommy replied for him, he being a very good ventriloquist, as the reader will remember.

"Oh, go shoot yourself!" said Tommy, and it sounded for all the world as though the passenger said it.

"What is that you say?" demanded the peddler.

"I said nothing," replied the passenger. "Only that you are a bloody old humbug," added Tommy.

"You are no gentleman, sir," replied the soap man.

"What is that you say, sir?" demanded the gentleman, springing up. "Tell me that I am no gentleman simply because I will not buy your soap?"

"Not that, sir. You said I was a humbug."

"I said nothing of the kind, although I might not have been far out of the way. Move on."

He did move on, being somewhat puzzled, and tackled another man across the aisle.

"You are a bloody old fraud!" come again, as though from the indignant passenger.

The peddler turned sharply around.

"I can knock the stuffing out of you in three shakes of a sheep's tail," said he, savagely.

"What do you mean, sir?" demanded the gent.

"You call me a fraud again and I will show you what I mean. If a man cannot get an honest living I would like to know it."

"Nobody is hindering you."

"Well, then, see that you keep your lip well buttoned up, that's all."

"I'll complain of you to the conductor."

"Well, all right, you try it," said he turning away about his business.

Two more completely fooled men never lived, neither understanding the other, but both indignant, and Tommy was not suspected in the least.

"Give me a cake of that soap," said an old lady, sitting close by, or it least it seemed as though she said it.

"Here you are, madam," said the peddler, handing her a cake with much politeness.

The woman looked at him in surprise.

"I do not wish any of your soap," said she.

"I beg pardon, madam, but did you not ask me just now for a cake?"

"No, sir, I did not."

The peddler turned to a gentleman sitting near her as though to prove that she asked for it, but he looked surprised and would have sworn that she did, although he didn't wish to say so; so the peddler turned away bothered again.

"I believe you are a great scoundrel, sir," the lady seemed to say.

"Madam, you are a lady, and of course have a right to your opinion; but I assure you that I have been selling this soap for the past ten years, and I never heard a lady make such a remark before."

"I don't understand you," sir, said she.

"Did you not say just now that you believed me to be a great scoundrel?"

"No, sir; I said nothing of the kind," said she.

"Good gracious!" exclaimed the soap peddler, again looking to the passenger next to her, who although silent, showed by his face that he would have taken his oath that she made the remark. Again he turned to business.

"Bad soap—stuff!" appeared to come from the passenger with whom he had the first trouble, and that puzzled peddler turned to wither him with a glance, but the man was looking earnestly out of the window.

"Your soap is bad, I know it," the old lady again seemed to say.

"Madam, I only wish you was a man," said he.

"Well, I think she is right," seemed to come from still another man near by.

"I'll pull your nose for a cent," said the peddler.

"What is that you say," demanded the man, angrily.

"I'll bust your crust."

"You are crazy, I have said nothing to you."

"Good God! I must have struck a car-load of liars."

"More likely you have got the jim-jams," the woman seemed to say, and a laugh followed.

Just then the conductor came through the car, and receiving several complaints from the passengers, the poor, puzzled soap man was hustled out of the car, utterly confused and uncertain as to whether there wasn't something the matter with him after all.

Of course Tommy and Dovey enjoyed the affair hugely, and by the time they had got over laughing about it, the train slowed up, and the suburbs of St. Louis began to show themselves.

CHAPTER XVI.

"HERE we are in St. Louis, Dovey," said Tommy Bounce reaching up for his satchel that lay in the rack.

"Good, for I am tired and hungry," replied Dovey.

"So am I, and I'm as full of dust as an old army wagon. Come on."

By this time the train had come to a standstill in the great depot, and a general rush was being made by everybody to get out, some to attend to business, some to stretch their legs, and others to stretch their necks.

Our friends were interested in all of these and more besides, so they were not the last ones out of the car by long odds.

"Let's walk to the Lindel House, and send our luggage by a porter or expressman, for my legs feel as though they were as destitute of joints as those of a pair of tongs," said Dovey.

"All right; that'll suit me."

"Lindel House?" asked a colored man who came up to them.

"Do you run for that hotel?" asked Tommy.

"Yes, boss; take yer right up dar."

"How will you do it?"

"Nice pair ob mules, boss."

"No, we object to riding behind mules. But tell us what sort of a house is it?"

"Fus' chop, boss?"

"Good hash?"

"Gosh, yas: betterin' dat. Ham an' eggs, an' all de funny fixin's. Besshouse in Saint Lewy."

"Temperance house?"

"T—what?" asked the astonished darkey.

"Any intoxicating liquors sold there?"

"Lord bress you, young uns, yer ken git all de whiskey yer want up dar, an' no tangel-leg cider. Take yer up?"

"No, but you may take our luggage, if you can show your credentials," said Tommy.

"Show my what?"

"Your credentials."

The puzzled darkey scratched his wooly head for an instant, and then suddenly replied: "Oh, yas, boss, you mean de mules. Dey am a standin' right out heah," and he started to show them.

"No, no; your credentials."

"Don't know what yer means, boss, I hain't got no credenshuls."

"What? no credentials? Well, we must find somebody that has, that's all," replied Tommy, turning away, but closely followed by the driver.

"Guess yer won't find nobody in Saint Lewy dat hab got dem things, boss."

"But how am I to know that you drive for the Lindel House?"

"Look at dat yer big button, sah," said he, quickly turning up the lapel of his coat and displaying a large brass badge.

"All right. Here are the checks. Deliver them right away, will you?"

"Shua, boss."

"Which way shall we go to reach it?"

"Right dis way; can't help seein' it sah."

"Thanks," said Tommy turning away.

"I say, boss," called the darkey.

"Well, what is it?"

"Say that big word agin, won't yer?" he asked, pointing to his badge.

"Centennial," said Tommy.

"Oh, yes. An' am dat what dey call badges out your way, boss?"

"Certainly."

"Much obliged, boss," he replied, turning away, repeating "Centennial" to himself several times.

He made a sensation among his fellows that very day by speaking of his badge as his Centennial.

Tommy and his friend arrived at the hotel at right, and scarcely reached the room that had been assigned them before their baggage arrived.

That afternoon and evening they spent in going around and becoming acquainted with the bright and go-ahead City of St. Louis, the rival of Chicago, and the bravest city on the Mississippi River.

But they found that it required several days to become well enough acquainted with it to be able to do business understandingly, and as that was Tommy's principal object in going there, he was bound to know the land thoroughly before he began to cultivate it with his drumming.

While walking along one of the streets they saw a swarm of gamins, or street boys gathered in front of a grocery store. They were of all sizes and ages, from three years old and two feet high to twelve years old, and as big as a dog.

As they drew near they saw what had caused them to gather there. It was about the same as would have drawn together a swarm of flies, namely, an empty sugar hogshead, with just enough of the sweet remaining to tempt them.

The old Dutchman who kept the store was dreadfully annoyed, and every few minutes would rush out of the door with a basket or something in his hand and yell at them, causing them to scatter just about as flies would have done, but they would almost immediately return to their sweet "licks" again the moment the old fellow left.

Then he would scare them away again, spitting out any quantity of German and English, and actually striking his own head, so mad was he because he could not get at his tormentors.

"Greatercotinhemel!" they heard him say, as they approached. "Ofe I gets mad mit myself puddy quick, py donders, I preak some heads of dot parrel. Glear out, you tam liddle loafers!"

"My dear sir," said Tommy, approaching this boiling mad Dutchman with an extremely sober face, "do you know that you are breaking the law by using such language as that?"

The Dutchman looked at him a moment with a surprised air, and then he opened on him.

"Cot for dam, fot you dink?"

"I think you are very wicked, str."

"Und dem tam poys!"

"Why, they are like flies."

"Like ter tuyfle more like. But fat for vas id your pizness?"

"Well, sir, we are appointed by the mayor to report all swearers to him."

"Vot for dot vas?"

"So they may be punished."

"Oh, mine grackey!" mused he. "Bud I chusd dell you how dot vas; dem poys, dey make a saint swear I bade you. Dey gome around dot hogsleg efry dime dot I go in der mine sdore ter make some monish for a guesdomer."

"Well, if you swear hereafter you must do it in German, or the outraged law will sweep down upon you like a hungry bald-headed eagle," said Tommy.

"Dot vas all righd," Misder. Come in andt hafe glass beer mit me."

"Well, seeing that it is you, we will," said he, following him into the store.

In three wags of a wagon spoke the old fellow had three glasses of foaming lager between them, and then, after a toast, each covered up his beer with his vest.

Just as our friend turned to leave the store, a customer entered, and the proprietor flew to wait on him.

On reaching the sidewalk they found four or five of the larger and more venturesome boys hanging over the edge of that sweetened hogshead with their heads into it out of sight, and their legs dangling around in a wild but interesting manner; in fact, a person could have told by the action of the lower portion of their bodies that the upper part was enjoying itself hugely.

Tommy grasped his cane and motioned Dovey to steal around on the other side. Without a thought that the vinegar was so near the honey, the boys were scraping and picking away, when Tommy and Dovey went for their exposed parts with their canes and gave each two or three sharp welts in such rapid succession that their first impressions was that they had been struck by lightning.

Two of them tumbled in head first, yelling like stuck pigs, while the others ran howling away as fast as their legs could carry them.

The two in the hogshead were as completely caught as a mouse is when he tumbles into a tin pail, and they jumped and bobbed up and down, trying to get out, all the while rubbing what they sat down on.

The Dutchman saw them through the window and forgetting his customer, he caught up a pail full of lager beer slops and came rushing out of the door.

"Ah! py gingoos, I have got you dot dime!" and he threw the slops all over them, drenching them like drowned rats.

Then they yelled again, and the other boys yelled and began pelting the Dutchman with stones, potatoes and whatever they could get hold of, hoping to drive him away from their unfortunate companions.

Tommy and Dovey saw at a glance that they would probably come in for a share of indignation, and so wisely started off down the street, leaving the unfortunate Dutchman to fight his own battles.

As they glanced over their shoulders they saw him tip the hog'shead over and spill the prisoners out upon the ground, and then run madly after those who were pelting him. How the matter ended they never learned, but it is safe to say that the old fellow forgot everything about there being a law against swearing.

Having become tolerably familiar with the city, Tommy took his sample-case of hardware and went out the next morning among the dealers to see if he could get some orders, while Dovey traveled around by himself, and visited all the various points of interest.

At the first store he succeeded in getting a very good order, but he soon learned that trade was dull, and that he had a task before him if he managed to cajole the hardware dealers into buying.

Going to another large store, he entered and asked to see the proprietor. He came forward, and Tommy at once accosted him.

"Good morning, sir. I represent the hardware house of Ebenezer Bounce, of New York."

"Oh, you do, eh?" said the merchant, who was inclined to be cutting.

"Yes, sir, and."

"How does Eben find trade now-a-days?"

"First-rate."

"Glad to hear it. But if he finds it so good, why the devil does he send out such a kid as you are to drum, that's what I would like to know?"

"Well, sir, that is a business secret, but I don't mind telling you. He takes a great interest in the West, especially Chicago and St. Louis, and as he manufactures some superior articles of hardware, he says to me, Tommy, my son—"

"Oh, you're his son, eh? Sending you out to get your teeth cut?"

"Not at all; I am his nephew, not his son. But he said that two such nice cities as Chicago and St. Louis should certainly have the advantages that my trade offers them, and so he sent me to Chicago."

"Did you sell much in Chicago?"

"Oh, sold everybody." Indeed, he did "sell" them.

"And now you want to sell somebody here, eh?"

"Well, I am not particular about it, for if the hardware dealers of St. Louis are willing to see those of Chicago get ahead of them and draw in all the country trade, why, well and good. But I have found one sensible dealer here at all events."

"Who is it?"

Tommy mentioned his name.

"How much did he buy?"

"Well, never mind. I would not tell any other dealer how much you buy."

"Oh, I'll give you permission," said he, with a significant laugh, for he didn't intend to buy at all.

"However, I almost wish now that I had done what the Chicago merchants wanted me to do."

"What was that?"

"To keep away from St. Louis entirely, and not sell any of my improved goods here," said he, for he had learned all about the great jealousy that existed between the two cities.

"Oh, they be hanged!" said the merchant, with contempt.

"They said that St. Louis was a dead-and-alive one horse old town anyway, and that old-fashioned articles were just as good for them as new ones were."

"They are confounded liars. We are as far ahead of Chicago, as Chicago is ahead of a flatboat. Let me see what you have got."

Tommy was not slow in showing him his samples, and by his skillful "buzzing," worked the jealous merchant up to buying about three thousand dollars' worth of his goods.

"Chin and cheek," mused Tommy, as he walked away after securing his order.

"Thunder and blazes!" growled the merchant, "I'd like to see a Hoosier nail-peddler that thought he was smarter than a St. Louis hardware dealer. I'd jam a boring-machine down his throat."

On the strength of these orders he managed to get two more that day, and he found that whenever all other arguments failed to make them buy, that any allusion to what Chicago had done would bring them to their trumps at once.

The result was that he took a lot of splendid orders in the city, and enclosed them to his uncle in New York, together with a letter giving a most lovely and plausible reason for not sending any since leaving Cleveland.

Business being attended to, he had only to wait now for money from his uncle, and any instructions he might transmit, and then lay low for fun.

Before the week was out he received the money and a long letter from his uncle, complimenting him on what he was doing, and giving general instructions regarding the future. He also received a letter from Frank Hoyt, posting him regarding the fun and fancy of New York; and telling him how dull and lonesome it was at the store since he had left it.

One day he and Dovey sauntered down on the levee where the steamboats were loading and unloading, and where the sluggish Mississippi sweeps muddily along like a trailing ocean.

The levee is also a great resort for roustabouts, laborers and idle negroes, and where more of the low and muscular life of St. Louis can be seen than anywhere else.

They watched the animated scene for some time, and were finally attracted to a group of negroes, who were very intent upon something which seemed to interest them greatly.

It proved to be a colored sharper—a black-and-tan three-card monte man—who was playing his little game for anything he could get, from a tip to a bit, and in many instances for a half paper of tobacco, or an old jack-knife. He was evidently there to scoop in every-thing.

He had captured nearly everything that the boys had about them, when an old white-haired darkey elbowed his way through the crowd, and demanded a chance to fight the little joker.

"Stan' back hire, boys, an' gib de ole man a show," said he. "Go on wid yer game," said he, boldly, to the monte player.

"Well, Uncle Dan, wha' am de matter wid you?" asked the gamester.

"I hears as how yer done gone clean out all ob de boys, an' I come fo' ter see how you did it."

"Oh, it's all straight an' square, Uncle Dan, jus' de simplest thing in de wol."

"Wal, lemme see how yer do."

"You see dem yer free cards, don yer, Uncle Dan?" asked the fellow turning them face up. "De ace ob spades; de jack ob diamonds; an' de queen ob hearts. See?"

"Oh, fo' shu. Any fool see dat. But how am de game dat you clean out de boys?"

"Squar, an' far, Uncle Dan, and dey hab got de same whack at de bank dat de bank hab got agin de individual. I take de keards an' fro 'em 'round like dat," said he, shuffling them slowly and in such a way that almost anybody, seemingly, could follow them; "an' den I turn up de jack like dat an' show you whar it am located, an' den I fro 'em 'round little mo' like dat, an' bet you two bits that you can't tell whar am dat jack."

"Go 'way nigger. Wha' you take de ole man fo' hey?" asked Uncle Dan, contemptuously.

"Fo' smart man, if yer can turn de jack."

"Oh, pshaw!" laughed the old darkey. "Am dat de game wha' you fool the boys with?"

"To be sho."

"Go 'way, nig, you foolin' de ole man."

"Well, I bet you two bits dat yer can't turn up de jack. You hears me?"

"If I had plenty ob money I'd bust de bank an' show de boys wha' fools dey am."

"How much hab you got?"

"One bit."

"All right. I bets two bits agin yer one dat yer can't turn up de jack fust time."

The banter was very tempting, and the old man slowly shoved his hand down into the mysterious recesses of his pantaloons-pocket.

"An' fo' to make the matter easier, I just turn up de jack myself an' let you see war it am located, an' den gib 'em two free mo' changes like dat. See?"

"An' you bet me two bits agin one dat I can't turn up dat jack now?" demanded the old man darting forward.

"To be sho."

"Oh, see me!" he exclaimed, with a world of triumph in his voice as he brought up that solitary bit.

"Watch the ole man now, and see him scoop in dem yer two bits, and he placed the bit upon the bale of cotton on which the game was being played. "Cover dat yer now!"

"Uncle Dan, I see yer mousetrap," said the sharper placing the money on top of the other.

"And yer all dar?"

"Go fo' de jack!" said several of the bystanders.

"Oh, see me, boys. See de ole man!" he exclaimed, and then turned to lift the jack.

He had kept his eye on the card all the while with a swagger that was wild in its manner; he took up the card.

It was the ace!

"Din I go fo' to sell yer, Uncle Dan?" asked the sharper, as he took up the money.

A murmur of disgust went through the crowd, while Uncle Dan stood like one lost in amazement. And that was just about how he was. It was fully a minute before he could recover his tongue.

"Wna'—wha'—who dar? War dat money?" he stammered out at length.

"You done gone lost, Uncle Dan," said a friend.

"Who dar—how dat?"

"You didn't turn up de jack an' I win de money," said the sharper.

"Dar am a mistake."

"Dat am so, Uncle Dan, but you make it."

"Gub me anoder chance fo' my money."

"Guess not much. Square is square. Who'll take anoder chance?" he asked, shuffling the cards again, while his last victim turned away and scratched his woolly head.

"Is done shua dat he hoodo me," said he.

"Try him again," said Tommy, placing four bits in the old man's hand.

"Chile, I see afraid dat he am a hoodo man."

"Nonsense. Try him again."

"All right, boss," said he turning to the gamester once more.

Tommy stood near enough to watch operations.

"Hea, nig, I go fo' dat game some mo'."

"All right, Uncle Dan. Here are de cards. See 'em dar, all straight an' squar," and he shuffled them, after showing them to him, even slower than he did before.

"Hea am two bits agin four bits dat I can turn up de ace," said the old man, bravely.

"Here am yer bonanza, ole man. Now show us dat ace."

The old man turned up a card. It was the queen.

"Dar am hoodo in it," yelled he.

"Dar am money in it," replied the sport, pocketing the stakes. "Try again?"

"Yes, just once mo'."

This time he lost as before, and turned away with saddened heart.

"Dar am de debbil's own hoodo in it, fo' shua," said he, turning to Tommy.

"Never mind. Give us a dance. Have you got any music?"

"Whar am Jonas Johnson?" inquired the old man, glancing around.

The darkey indicated where they were standing.

"Whar am yer barnjo,

"Down hea ahind a cotton bale."

"Lead him out and gib us some touches so some mans hea wants fo' to see some capers"

The Banjoist obeyed orders; but he moved so slowly that it seemed impossible that he could ever get up life enough to play anything livelier than Old Hundred or a funeral march. But the moment he pulled his old banjo out of a coffee sack and began to tune it up, it was evident that he was good for that business if for nothing else.

The dozen or twenty darkeys who had been standing around the three card monte man, now pricked up their ears as they heard Jonas tuning up his instrument, and forgetting their losses, came forward to take part in the fun.

Both Tommy and Dovey had seen negro character dances in New York, but here they saw them in all the reality of their grotesque essence.

Such a wild, rollicking, slouchy lot dancing they had never seen before. They danced over, and the longer they danced the happier they grew.

"Don't you dance, Uncle Dan?" asked Tommy, for the old man as yet had taken no part in the performance other than slapping his hands together in keeping time and cheering the others on.

"Wal, chile, I's gettin' most too old fo' to kick up much. But I could used fo' ter beat any nig dat loafed round der levee."

"Try a step or two."

"Wal, honey, I'll try it," said he. "Hole on, heer; gibe de ole man a chance."

A wild shout followed the request, and the others drew off, leaving the field open to Dan. The banjo player didn't stop, however; for, in truth, he only knew the one tune, and he was bound to give them all they wanted of that.

"Oh, hush!" said Dan, as he threw himself forward and began to put himself in shape.

"Go in, Uncle Dan!" they all shouted, and in he did go, somewhat awkward and stiff at first, but gradually getting warmed up until he was putting down an "essence" that would have done credit to a professional dancer.

As a wind-up, Tommy and Dovey gave them all a couple of bits each, and a happier lot of darkeys were never seen.

"Did you ever saw a buttin' match?" asked Dan, turning to Tommy.

"Well, no, not lately. The last one we saw was with the old goat at Andover, eh, Dovey?"

"Yes, between Pike and the goat."

"Hea, you, Hi Washington," called Dan, who began to regard himself as ring-master "come a heer. Whar am Nick?"

"He am heer, Uncle Dan."

"Now, jus go fo' a but, you hear me?"

The two darkeys threw aside their hats, and taking positions about ten feet apart, lowered their heads and went for each other.

You have seen goats fight, I dare say. Well, the heads of these darkeys came together like the hard skulls of two William goats. The force of the concussion was so great that it sent them both ever backward upon the ground. But up they got and went at it again.

Our friends enjoyed the strange sport for some time, and then gave them each two more bits for the bettering they had given each other's skull.

"Would you like to travel with Barnum's show?" asked Tommy.

"Oh, fo' shua," they both replied.

"And exhibit your butting?"

"Yas, massa."

"Well, Mr. Barnum is in town, and he wants two just such geniuses as you are. Here's his address. Go and call on him and say that Mr. Smith sent you to him for butts. He is a nice old man, but somewhat queer; and if he refuses to engage you, it will be simply because he does not wish to do so without knowing how hard you can butt. Therefore, if he refuses, all you have to do is to go for him. Butt him over three or four times, and he will hire you at once, and give you good wages. But he always wishes to know just what a performer can do before he engages him."

"All right, boss, we'll show him," said the foremost.

How well they kept their agreement must be told in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE reader will remember that the last bit of fun and adventure which Tommy Bounce and his friend Dovey were engaged in was on the levee of St. Louis, in which city they had been stopping for a few days.

They will also remember the "bucking match" which took place between two darkeys there, for the amusement of the mischievous youths, and that Tommy made a bargain with them to call on the great showman, P.T. Barnum, the next day, he being in town on some business, at the same time giving them his address and telling them to say that Mr. Smith had sent them to him.

Well, the two darkeys were greatly elated at the prospect of a traveling job, for Tommy had assured them that Mr. Barnum would undoubtedly engage them if they could only convince him of their butting abilities, and early the next morning they were seen hanging around the great showman's hotel, waiting for him to make his appearance in the office.

"What are you loafing around here for?" asked one of the porters, who had been attracted by their extremely seedy and uncouth appearances.

"Dun gone wait fo' Marser Barnum" replied one of them.

"What the devil do you want of Mr. Barnum?"

"Got some business wid him," said the other.

"I don't believe it."

"Oh, dat am fo' shua. Here am de card."

"Well, take seats out yonder, and keep as much out of sight as you can until Mr. Barnum comes down to breakfast," said the porter, motioning them to a seat out behind a pile of trunks.

"How long fo' he come?"

"He won't be down for an hour yet, and I guess you had better take a walk around the block anyway."

"All right, boss; we'll come back in little less than an hour."

"Better make it two," growled the porter, as he watched them walk towards the door. "Wonder what the devil Mr. Barnum wants of such a pair of rusty's anyway? Going to put them in his menagerie I guess."

"I say, 'Hi,' I wish dat we had a chance fo' ter buck dat porter," said one of them, as they left the hotel.

"Cos why?"

"Cos he puts on mo' airs dan a full blown hotel clerk."

"He betta look out fo' us; we's on business, we is," and away they loafed to kill an hour.

But before the time was up they were back to the hotel again, in waiting.

Presently Mr. Barnum came from the dining-room, and was at once pointed out to the darkies, who approached him.

He walked to the office and called on the clerk to hand him his letters, and as he did so the two black boys approached him, hat in hand.

"Marsar Barnum, sah."

Barnum turned and regarded them.

"Well, what do you want of me?"

"We met Marsar Smith yesterday down on de lawn, and we showed him a buckin' show."

"A bucking show?" said Barnum, who thought he had heard of every kind of show in the world.

"Yes, Marsar Barnum—buck each odder wid our heads."

"Like goats?"

"Yes, sah, only we hab more buck dan a pair ob goats hab got, sah."

"Well, what of it?"

"Marsar Smith he tole us fo' to come hea an' you would hire us fo' ter go wid yer show."

"Nonsense. Who is Smith? What Smith is it?" asked Barnum, turning to examine his letters.

"Done know, sah, only he axed us if we would like fo' ter trouble wid Barnum's show, and when we say yes, he jus' gib us dis yer card," said he, handing out the card Tommy had given him.

Mr. Barnum glanced at it, but beyond the name of the hotel there was nothing on it save *John Smith*.

"Nonsense," said he, handing it back.

"Done yer tink dat we is good buckers, sah?" asked "Hi."

"I am sure I don't care a snap whether you are or not," said he, turning away; "I don't want any buckers."

"Specs as how yer do, Marsar Barnum, if you could only see us," said one of them, as they followed him towards his room.

"Better see us," said the other.

"P'raps you tink dat we am slouches?"

"I don't know anything about you."

This settled it. Remembering what Tommy had told them about the great showman's peculiarities, and that he would never engage anybody unless he had a specimen of what they could do. "Hi" lowered his head like a ram, and stepping back a few feet he ran head first at Barnum, striking him a tremendous whack between the shoulders and landing him all in a heap upon the floor.

"Ha! here! help!" shouted Barnum, but while he was struggling to his feet the other darkey went for him head first, striking him on his posterior and sending him heels over head, and knocking the wind out of him so that he couldn't speak.

"How's dat, Marsar Barnum?"

"Can't we buck?"

"Help! help!"

"Gib him some mo'," said "Hi," again keeling the poor showman over and nearly killing him.

"Murder! help!"

"Can't we buck?"

"Gwine fo' ter hire us, sah?"

"What the devil are you doing?" cried two or three of the porters, headed by the clerk, who had come to Barnum's rescue.

"Bucking," said "Hi," turning and banging his head into the clerk's breadbasket, knocking him down.

One of the porters ran for an officer, and the others tried to prevent the butting rascals from doing further mischief; but they made it exceedingly lively for the whole crowd, keeling first one and then another over, and so completely demoralizing Barnum that he lay panting upon his back, and made no attempt to get up.

"Oh, no; maybe as how dese childens can't buck!" said they, dancing around their victims.

"Gwine fo' to hire us ter go wid yer show?"

"Yes, yes; consider yourselves engaged," said Barnum, faintly.

"Good 'nough, Marsar Barnum. Now get up an' we will show you what we is gwine fo' to do fo' yer."

"Here; I'll show you what I'll do for you, you black rascals," said a policeman, rushing with drawn club upon them. "What the devil are you doing here?"

"Showin' Marsar Barnum wha' we gwine fo' ter do fo' him in de show."

"I'll give you a 'show' in the penitentiary, you villains," said Barnum, struggling to his feet. "Take them in, officer, and I will prefer charges against them."

"And so will I," said the clerk.

"And so will I," put in the porter.

"Come along," said the officer, grabbing them.

"Is yer gwine fo' ter go back on us, Marsar Barnum?"

"I think you went back on me, you villains. You have nearly murdered me," said he, limping away.

"But, sah, dat young man, Smith, he tole us fo' ter buck yer if yer didn't hire us," said "Hi."

"Confound Smith, I know nothing about him or you either," growled the showman, turning and hobbling up stairs.

"Come along. You are a pair of frauds," and the officer started with them to the station-house, where they were locked up.

Tommy and Dovey had managed to be where they could see and hear what was going on, and those who know them need not be told that they enjoyed the affair very much.

Barnum did not go to make a complaint against them; but the clerk of the hotel did, and on that they were brought up before a police justice. A pair of more confused and crestfallen coons were never arraigned before. Gradually the truth worked its way through their thick skulls that they had been made the victims of a mischievous sell, and it would have been "all day" with our hero if they could have got at him.

They explained the affair to the judge, creating considerable fun for those present, and finally the clerk withdrew his charge, and they were allowed to depart with a reprimand and a caution about being caught in such a scrape again.

"Now, by gosh! de indewidual dat I wants fo' ter see, am dat young cuss as played dem yere roots on us. Gosh darn if I done poke my head clean fro' him," said Hi.

"If I gets one buck at him wid my head, I kicks de stuffin' all out ob him," said the latter.

They went back to the levee again, and got loudly laughed at for telling their experience, which, of course, made them madder yet. But they failed to find Tommy, who knew well enough that he would be apt to catch darby if they caught him.

When the joke was told to Mr. Barnum no one enjoyed it better than he did. "But," said he, and Tommy stood by and heard him, "I would like a good rat-tan and that 'Smith,' and work 'em up together for about ten minutes; I think I could cure him of practical joking."

But he came out just as everyone did who worked or said anything against our hero, as will presently be seen.

The next morning, in the column of "Wants" in the *St. Louis Republican*, this advertisement appeared:

"DOGS WANTED:—All sorts, breeds, shapes and sizes. Bring dogs to — hotel, and call for Mr. Barnum."

A little card like that would not be apt to catch the eye of any but dog fanciers or owners. At all events, neither Mr. Barnum or any of his friends saw it, or if any of them did happen to see it, they would naturally think that he was going to get up a dog show or something of the kind, and give it only a passing thought.

But hundreds of dog owners in St. Louis saw it, while dozens of others who had no dogs went right off and stole one to speculate on.

About nine o'clock they began to arrive. All kinds, sizes, shapes, colors, and conditions of men and boys, lugging, dragging, coaxing or kicking all sorts, sizes, shapes, colors, and breeds of dogs, came flocking to the hotel and inquired for Mr. Barnum.

They swarmed into the office, reading-room, parlors, hallway and, in fact all over the hotel, in spite of landlord, porters or servants, while several of the dogs got to fighting, and made things decidedly enjoyable around the place.

Mr. Barnum had been warned of what was in store for him, and therefore kept his room until the crowd could be got out of the hotel. He saw that a joke had been played on him by some one, probably by that same "Smith," and he was mad.

Meantime there was the very devil to pay in and around the hotel, and, of course, a crowd collected to see what it was all about. In vain did the servants of the hotel try to persuade them that Mr. Barnum did not want any dogs, they would not believe it, and demanded a sight of Barnum.

"Clear out!" howled the clerk, as a savage-looking fellow, with a savage-looking dog, came shuffling up to the office box.

"Can I see Mr. Barnum?" he asked

"No, sir, you cannot."

"Why?"

"Because he does not wish to see you."

"Wal, now, how the h— do you know whether he does or not?" asked the fellow, lifting his fierce-looking brute upon the bar, where he opened his short lips menacingly and fixed his wicked eyes on the clerk.

"He don't wish to buy any dog. Take him away; you are about the five-hundredth one that has been here already."

"Wal, what did he advertise for dorgs for, then?"

"What do you mean?"

"Look a' dare!" said the rough, handing out a copy of the paper, and pointing to the card.

"It's a fraud, put in to play a trick on Mr. Barnum," said the clerk.

"Say, I'd like ter see the old humbug once; I'd play a real nice trick on him, I would."

"Well, you want to take your dog and get right out of this."

The dog kept his eye on the clerk, and he kept well out of the way, you bet; for that animal looked dreadfully hungry, and if his looks did not belie him, he would just as soon have satisfied the cravings of his stomach with that clerk's nose as to wait and take his chances at getting something better.

"Say, der you know what I think o' you?" asked the dog's owner, after watching him for a while.

"I haven't the remotest idea, sir."

"Well, I think you're a duffer, a snide, an N. G., and a back-capper."

"What has given you such a good opinion of me?"

"I think you've got a lot of dogs, and are playing to sell Barnum yerself, an' leave us uns out in the cold; that's what I believe 'bout you."

"Nothing of the kind, sir: I never owned a dog or borrowed one. Take your beast away."

"Oh, you go shoot yerself. Watch him, Tiger," said he, speaking to the dog.

Just then a chap came up to the counter with a little black and tan dog under his coat, out of sight.

The clerk leaned forward to learn his business, not thinking that he was also one of them.

"Is Mr. Barnum about?"

"Barnum?" snapped the clerk.

"Yas; he advertised for dorgs."

"Great heavens!"

"I've got one here," said he, unbuttoning his coat and allowing his dog to leap out upon the bar.

But no sooner did he do so, than the bull-dog seized him, and a lively rough-and-tumble took place right there on the counter, upsetting everything on it, and finally tumbling off on the side where the clerk stood.

The agility with which that clerk got upon that bar out of harm's way, and the way he yelled for the police was a caution. Meanwhile, the servants had shoved the dog crowd out of the place, and were being successful in keeping them out.

Presently a policeman came to the rescue, and the crowd scattered. Then he drove the two fellows out of the office, and done his best at scattering and clearing out the doggy crowd.

But the most of them had no notion of giving up the affair in this way, and so they walked and watched around, hoping to get a glimpse of the great man.

By this time almost everybody knew something about the affair, and to see a man without having a broad grin on his face, was an exception and not the rule.

Presently Barnum came down into the office, and all hands began talking and laughing over the affair—or, rather, all of those who had not had the life-hal-worried out of them by the confounded dogs.

But it was agreed that the coast was now clear, and that no danger of annoyance remained for Mr. Barnum, if he went out.

"Well, I am glad of it, I will just get through with my business as speedily as possible, and get out of St. Louis as quick as cars can take me, for there is evidently somebody here who is enjoying himself at my expense more than I care to have him."

"I wish I could find out who it is!" said the landlord, savagely.

"So do I; but these jokers don't often give themselves away, and I am afraid we shall never find out," said Barnum.

"But if I ever do, I'll send them to prison?"

Mr. Barnum turned and left the hotel, but even before he reached the sidewalk the waiting dog-owners spied him, and came rushing up from every conceivable direction.

"Here you are, Mr. Barnum," cried one.

"Here's a purp."

"Here's one of the best in the world."

"Pure blood, Mr. Barnum."

"Genuine bull."

"Clean Skey, sir."

"Here's your Newfoundland."

"How's this for a spaniel?"

"And this for a terrier?" demanded first one and then another.

"Clear out! I don't want any dogs."

"Here's a beautiful black an' tan, boss."

"Police!"

"Here's a coach dog, Mister Barnum."

"Go to the devil, all of you!" yelled the enraged victim, darting back into the hotel.

"All right, we'll follow you," said they, rushing into the hotel after him.

Here ensued a scene of the wildest confusion. Mr. Barnum was gesticulating wildly, and trying to be heard above the din of barking dogs, and cursing, calling owners, while the landlord and his assistants rushed forward with brooms, canes, umbrellas, and whatever they could lay their hands on, attempting to eject the invaders.

Two policemen also joined in the fun, and swung their clubs around, cracking a head wherever they saw it, whether it belonged to a man or a dog, thereby kicking up the most terrible row that was ever heard of.

Some of the dogs broke away from their keepers, and then broke for the doors, others improved the opportunity presented for a fight, while five or six of the largest ones went sampling the skins of those who were trying to drive them out.

In the confusion Barnum escaped to his room, and the officers drove the dog men entirely away from the vicinity, leaving the coast really clear, although Mr. Barnum refused to leave the hotel for several hours afterwards, and then from a side entrance, where he took a carriage and rode rapidly away about his business.

But as for those dog men; if they had only known that the two amused young men who stood watching the whole affair were the authors of their trouble, it was safe to say they would each have killed his dog, if he had refused to take a piece of them.

But, as usual, Tommy enjoyed all the fun without being suspected of putting up the job, and as they walked back to the Lindel House, where they were stopping, they laughed loud and heartily over the comical scene they had just witnessed.

"I'll tell you what it is Tommy," said Dovey, "if we are not careful we shall make St. Louis as hot for us as Chicago was when we left."

"Well, I don't care much if we do; we must have our fun anyway, you know; and, besides, we shan't remain here much longer at best."

"All right."

"I am anxious to get out West and give you a chance

to gratify your ambition by hunting Indians and buffaloes."

"I am ready for anything, Tommy."

"But we'll get a close cut on our hair before we get out there, so as to be prepared for emergencies."

"Yes, but there is time enough for that; what shall we do this evening?"

"Hanged if I know. Let's go to the theater."

"All right."

"But I say, Dovey, do you know I would give fifty dollars for a picture of that muss at the hotel just now!"

"Well, it wouldn't be worth it."

"Indeed it would. I have seen a great many comical things in my day, but that was the liveliest and the funniest one that I ever saw," and they both laughed again so heartily that people turned around and looked at them.

"Oh, if Barnum only knew!"

"And if these darkeys only knew!"

"And if those dog men only knew!"

"And that hotel clerk!"

"And that landlord—ha! ha! ha!"

"Well, I think we are even with old P. T. for the many bad shows he has coaxed us into."

Perfectly satisfied with the fun they had worked out of the affair, they kept on until they had reached their hotel; here each found letters in waiting for them, and their time was all employed between then and supper, reading and answering them. Even fun was forgotten.

Tommy received a letter from his Uncle Ebenezer, complimenting him on his success, but hinting that he had better return before long, as he was anxious for him to get the whole business in hand, with a view to taking his place entirely, and allowing him time to enjoy the fortune he had already made, by traveling abroad with his family.

This did not exactly suit our hero, but he sat down and answered the letter, stating that he was desirous of visiting California, and being nearly half way there he thought he might never have so good a chance again, and that he could also pick up considerable trade, without doubt.

From there he would return by another route in part, and get back to New York in about two months.

That evening, as they returned from the theatre, they came across an old plug hat lying on the sidewalk. Dovey was on the point of kicking it, when Tommy held him back.

"Dovey, my boy, I am surprised at you."

"What for?" asked Dovey, in wonder.

"Haven't you ever had the pleasure of kicking a hat with a brick in it?"

"Well, come to think of it, I believe I did celebrate April Fool's day in that way once."

"I dare say; now let us take a look at this one and see if it is as innocent as it seems to be," saying which he lifted the old hat, and, sure enough, there was a brick tauling up beneath it.

"Good enough," said Dovey.

"Yes, and much better than it would have been had I allowed you to kick it. By the way, as it is almost impossible for a person to pass by an old hat without kicking it, I wonder why we never thought to fix one for old Pike, our jamitor at Andover?"

"It is strange, and too bad, why I could almost go there for another term for the sake of playing it on him, eh?"

"Yes, but as that is next to impossible, and there are possible things here in St. Louis, suppose we try the possible things first."

"What do you mean?"

"Allow me to illustrate," said he, taking up the hat and brick.

Arriving at the hotel, Tommy placed the brick on the end of the sidewalk, where they could see it from a window, and then covered it with the hat.

Leaving it there and retiring out of sight, or at least out of suspicious nearness, they did not have to wait long before a foppish-looking fellow came sauntering along, swinging his cane and whistling some popular air.

Seeing the hat, he made a dive for it—as ninety out of a hundred would do; and as that same ninety would have done, he kicked that brick about a rod along the sidewalk, and then sat down to hug his toes and to cuss words.

After about five minutes of this, he glanced around to see if anybody was observing him, and he muttered to himself:

"I think I can kick the tar right out of the son of a gun that put up that job."

But as no one appeared to dispute him, he struggled to his feet and began to hobble away.

He had gone only a few yards, however, before an idea appeared to strike him, and turning, he picked up the hat and arranged it as he found it.

"I think it will take some of the pain out of my foot to know that somebody else makes as big an ass of himself as I did," he muttered.

If he stopped for that sort of consolation he did not have to wait long; for presently two old chaps came along, arm-in-arm, and both pretty full of crooked whisky.

Both espied the hat at the same time, and each struggled to get a kick at it as each kept the other from reaching it.

"Lemme h'ist her, Joe," said one.

"No; lemme show you how we used to kick foot-ball when I was a boy. Hold on: lemme have the first crack at it, and I'll treat."

This appeared to settle matters, and the old fellow set his own hat on the back of his head, took a walk around the tempting tile, and then stepping back a few feet, he went for it with a whoop.

I don't think a brick was ever kicked further, unless a mule kicked it. But the air was positively sulphurous around there for the next ten minutes, occasioned by the old fellow giving expression to his feelings.

He hobbled around on one foot, looking up at the hotel windows and begging in the most pathetic manner for somebody to put his head out of a window and acknowledge that he had placed that brick under the hat.

He even offered a reward of fifty thousand dollars for anyone to father the job.

But it was late, and nobody seemed disposed to humor, or favor him; so he took his friend's arm and hobbled along towards home, sad and dejected.

After awhile Tommy went up and put the hat in position again; but he had scarcely got into the house before an Irishman came along and espied it.

Taking it up and examining it for a moment, they heard him mutter, as he placed his old shabby cap on the brick:

"Be gob, but some chap has lost his hat wid a brick in it, an' as it's better nor mine, I think I'll swap hats, an' lave my own in its place. Sure, it's just as good for a terrible example, anyhow." Saying which, he placed it on his head and walked cheerfully away, never dreaming that there was a trick connected with it.

But this ended their fun in that direction, and so they sought their beds.

CHAPTER XVIII.

DURING the next few days Tommy Bounce and his friend Dovey kept somewhat quiet, going about St. Louis and visiting points of interest in the city and suburbs.

The reader will remember that Tommy wrote to his uncle, stating his wishes about visiting the Far West and California.

His uncle wrote him a rather curt reply, intimating that he and his friend had been on the road long enough attending to their own pleasure rather than the business on which they had been sent, and commanding them to return home to New York at once.

"That settles our little racket," groaned Tommy, rather dismally, after reading the letter.

"What can't be cured must be endured," philosophically replied Dovey. "Let's take a drive into the country to-day, and we can start back to-morrow morning."

"Ah! The proper caper for all the world," replied Tommy, with much earnestness. "I know a stable down here where they have some fine saddle mules."

"Mules!"

"Yes. I think a mule-ride would be just about novel enough to be enjoyable."

"And just about exciting enough to be interesting."

"Exciting?"

"To be sure. Did you ever hear of a mule-ride that was not exciting?"

"Oh, you are thinking of common mules, such as we have East. But these are superior animals, well-broken, and accustomed to good society."

"Well, all right; let us try them," said he, going out upon the street, followed by Dovey.

Going directly to a livery stable, they hired each a fine-looking, mouse-colored, saddle mule, and started to ride away.

"Perfectly harmless?" asked Tommy of the stable-boy.

"Faix, as harmless as a pair of kittens."

"No tricks?"

"Only the wan."

"Only one! What is that, pray?"

"The trick of batin' ony mule on the road, sure," replied the son of Erin, with a wink and a grin.

"Very good; I owe you one," said Tommy, who could appreciate a joke, even if it was against him.

"All right, sur; but it's a cash business I'm doin'."

"Oh, I understand. Here, here is a quarter for you," said Tommy.

"And here is another," said Dovey.

"Top o' the mornin' ter ye, gentlemen. That ye may have a soine ride," replied the hostler, bowing awkwardly.

"Now, you are sure about the mules, are you?"

"Faix, I've done the care of 'em long enough ter know."

"No bucking?"

"Not wance."

"Or biting?"

"Wal, faix, they do be boitin' sometimes," replied Pat, scratching his head.

"The devil they do, now?"

"Wal, faix, they does be bitin' their mangers sometimes when feed is scarce."

"Oh, you are sharp enough for a hay-cutter."

"An' so I am sure."

"Well, do the mules ever kick?"

"Wal, they kicks nagurs sometimes."

"Don't like negroes, eh?"

"No; mules that be as honest as sheep will play the devil wid nagurs always."

"Well, but they behave themselves with white folks?"

"Faix, loike jintlemens."

"Good enough. If we follow this street, it will take us right out to the open country, will it not?"

"Faix, it will not."

"Why, you just told us to follow this street."

"But ye axed me would the strale take ye out into the country."

"Well."

"No, the strale won't take ye out to the country, but the mules will."

Tommy glanced at Dovey, and they both laughed and rode away.

The mules were really fine specimens of that animal, and were evidently kept entirely for saddle use.

They followed slowly up the street a few blocks, at a quiet pace, trying to fit themselves to their seats, and get used to animals they had never ridden before.

The mules behaved well enough, and, reaching the outskirts of the city, they whipped them up a bit.

"How do you like it, Tommy?"

"First class. Good as a horse."

"I like mine better."

They were just then passing through a lot of little cabins occupied by colored people, and they noticed that they cut and ran the moment they came in sight.

"I wonder what the deuce is the matter with all the coons?" asked Dovey.

"Guess they take us for officers."

"I guess they don't mean to take us at all."

Just then an old wench ran out and began to cuff a little darkey who stood in the street.

"Go in de house, you, Abraham Lincoln! Don yer got no eyes in yer head? Don yer see dem yer mules a-comin' 'long dar? Git in de house fas', fo' dey git near nuf dey heave one ob der hoofs at yer, an' den you war a dead nigger shua. Mules don't like niggers no ways."

"That's what the matter is. They are afraid of our mules. I have often heard that darkies were mortally afraid of mules and alligators, both of whom seem to bear them no love; or, rather, one loves to kick them and the other to eat them."

"See 'em run!"

It was a fact. They scattered and got a safe distance out of the way. Every window pane had a black mug looking out of it, and a different sized coon peeped from behind every corner as they rode along.

Seeing an old wench standing inside of a rude front fence, Tommy rode up and halted.

"Go 'way from dar, white man! Go 'way dar!" she screamed, and before he could speak she had fled into the house, although she appeared presently at the open window.

"What's the matter with you, aunty?"

"Matter! wha' fo' dat muel?" said she.

"What for! Why to ride, of course."

"Fo' ter kill niggers mo' like. Go 'way!"

"Why, they are perfectly harmless."

"Ya, may be all berry nice wid you's ones; but dar nigger was a muel in de whole bressed world dat wouldn't leave a good meal anytime fo' ter gita good kick at a nigger."

"Oh, those are the ordinary plebeian animals; these are high-toned mules."

"Goshermighty! high-heeled, too, I guess."

"They are the Fred Douglas mule," continued Tommy, chaffing her, while a crowd of black neighbors gathered at a safe distance.

"Don care nuffin 'bout what kind ob breed he am. I nebber seen nuffin yet dat had long ears dat I would trust nohow. Man come 'long hea once wid de mos' honestest lookin' muel dat I ebber seen, an' he tole me dat it war de muel dat George Washington rode in ter de Rebolushun, an' so I war fool 'nough fo' ter git interested in dat muel, an' ter go round fo' ter see him clus, when de fus dat I knowd I don gone don know nuffin' tall."

"What was the trouble, aunty?"

"De trouble war dat I got widin' reach of dat yer muel's hind legs, an' he raise me."

"Raised you, eh?"

"Yer better think so, honey, kick me right clean ober de house in ter de back garden."

"Hurt you much?"

"Hurt me! Dun gon knock 'bout a quart ob teef out ob my head."

"A quart?"

"Guess so, putty nigh. My old mudder says she hear 'em rattlin' down on de roof of the house as I war a sailin' ober."

"That was very wrong of Washington's mule."

"But he couldn't help it, I tole yer; fo' it am jus' as natural fo' a mule to kick a nigger as it am fo' a duck to swim."

"Well here's a quarter for you, aunty," said Tommy, handing a scrip towards her.

"Guess not, honey," said she shaking her head.

"Come and get it."

"Wouldn't go fo' dat if it war a five dollar bill. I war histed once."

Our heroes laughed heartily, and while they were doing so Dovey's mule lifted his right hind leg and knock a fly off his long ear, swinging his head around to do so, and nearly throwing him off.

"Whoa, you brute!"

"Look dar now! Dat yer mule am a regular kicker. I know by the way he handles his foot," cried the old wench and those who concluded that they were far enough away indulged in a loud laugh.

"Come on, Tommy, my nag is becoming nervous over the delay."

"Hole on dar, hole on!" shouted a man close behind them, and wheeling about, they found themselves confronted by the two darkies whom they had sent to Barnum, and there was fire in their eyes.

"Now we are in for it," said Dovey.

"Wha' fo'—wha'—wha' fo' yer do dat?" said the leader, approaching threateningly.

"What do you refer to, sir?" demanded Tommy, as cool as a cellar.

"Who dat you send fo' ter see Mr. Barnum?"

"I fail to catch your meaning, sir."

"Who don gone make fool ob us?"

"How should I know?"

"Guess you do know good 'nough."

Tommy shook his head and started up his mule.

"Hol' on dar!" yelled both of the darkies.

"What is the matter with you, my colored brothers?"

"We arn't no brudders to you's, but we is jus' a gwine fo' ter get squar about dat Barnum dat you fool us 'bout."

The reader will remember how badly these two sons of Ham were sold, and what a terrible battling they gave Mr. Barnum, to whom they had been sent for an engagement.

"What's the matter with you?" demanded Dovey.
 "Come down from dat yer muel an' we'll jus' show
 fer what de matter am."

"Oh, I couldn't think of doing such a thing; besides,
 I am in a hurry."

"Hole on dar!" yelled the muel darkey, making a
 dash for their bridles.

But Tommy was too quick for them, and wheeling
 his mule around suddenly, presenting his heels; that
 quiet-looking animal laid back his long ears and raised
 those terrible hind hoofs of his, and the next instant
 that darkey was kicked over a fence into a yard
 where he fell upon a flower-bed without doing himself
 much damage, but completely spoiling the flowers;
 and the woman who owned it came out of the house
 with a long-handled mop in her hands, and the way
 he went for that unfortunate coon astonished him so
 much that he almost forgot the raising he had just re-
 ceived.

At the same time that the mule had kicked the dar-
 key, he threw up his hinder parts so quickly that
 Tommy was thrown over upon his neck, to which he
 clung in the most comical manner, while the satisfied
 beast fanned him with his huge ears.

But Dovey's mule didn't get so good a crack at the
 other darkey, so he grabbed him with his teeth and
 was trying hard to get a big mouthful of meat out of
 his health department, while the victim was yelling
 all kinds of bloody murder, and creating the greatest
 excitement among the colored people.

It was fun to see the way he handled that darkey,
 and how anxious he appeared to be to get at him with
 his hind legs. He would shake him a moment and
 then reach around with his right hind leg and cuff him
 with it.

At length he dropped him, and as Tommy had re-
 gained his seat, they put whip to their mules and
 started out of that as quickly as possible, leaving the
 confusion at its height. Glancing back they saw the
 fellow rolling on the ground and howling for the po-
 lice, while the one who had been kicked over the fence
 was trying to get out, but instead was getting a terrible
 pounding.

Laughing heartily, they started on a faster gait, and
 were soon out in the open country.

"Bully for our mule," said Dovey.

"Yes, indeed, I'll never doubt the friendship of one
 of them again."

"What fun!"

"Yes, for the mules and ourselves."

"But not so much for the coons."

"No, I should rather say not."

"We must contrive to return by some other road,
 for if they were mad before, they were boiling now."

They continued on for a mile or two, when they met
 an old darkey riding a donkey, on which he sat, with
 his long legs almost dragging as he rode along.

"Hello, pop, how you was?" said Tommy, pulling
 up in front of the jackass, who was only too glad to get
 a chance for rest.

"Wal, putty far, chile. How be you self?" asked the
 old man confidently.

"Oh, first rate; never better in my life."

"Dat's good, chile. Dar's nuffin like enjoyin' good
 zealth in dis yer wicked wold."

"Very good thing to have pop. You look healthy?"

"Wal, chile, de ole man might be better than he
 am, but I's not gwine fo' ter complain 'bout it. Am
 you from de city?"

"Oh, yes; just rode out."

"Yas. How's eberything dar?"

"Lively."

"Dreftul lively, I spect. Whar gwine?"

"Just going out to see if we can see a place that
 suits us anywhere."

"Yas! Speculators, I 'spect."

"No. English noblemen."

"Yas. Big bugs like?"

"Very big. By the way, that is a nice little Jack you
 are riding," said Tommy, with a mischievous look.

"Chile, he am a jewel."

"Got a good voice?"

"Don't know wha' you mean, chile."

"Are his vocal organs good?"

"Oh, yas—sound in wind an' limb," said the old
 man, mistaking the question and supposing that the
 vocal organs meant something else.

"Is he yours?"

"To be shu', chile."

"That's a lie?" said a voice that seemed to come
 from the mouth of the jackass.

Tommy was trying his ventriloquism again.

"That old dark almost turned white, while both
 Tommy and Dovey manifested the greatest astonish-
 ment."

"What is that?" asked Tommy.

"Can your donkey talk?" asked Dovey.

"Wa—wa—chile—I—I,"—he stammered, slowly dis-
 mounting.

"He said you lied," said Dovey.

"Oh, my; I—I guess not, chile," he said, walking
 around the sleepy-looking animal.

"He does he!" said the donkey.

This time the old fellow screamed right out.

"Oh, my! De debble am in dat yer jack, shua!"

"But I am afraid that there is something wrong with
 you, pop. It is the most remarkable thing that I ever
 saw, and there is only one instance on record of a
 four-legged jackass talking—the one that Baalam used
 to ride, you know."

"No, chile, I nebber knowed Baalam," replied the old
 man, with fear and trembling.

"But are you sure that you own him?"

"I'o' de Lord, chile, I own dat yer jack."

"No he don't; he stole me!" said the jack.

"Oh, my gosh!" said he, falling upon his knees. "I
 nebber gone done such a fing. I am a deacon ob a
 prayer meetin' chile. I is a good man."

"He's an old fraud!" said the donkey.

"Oh, my gosh!" groaned he.

At a signal from Tommy, Dovey began to question
 the donkey while he attended to the answers.

"How old are you?"

"Five years."

"Oh, my gosh! Don't tork to him, chile. He am
 bewitched fo' shua. Some nigger hab hoodo'd him
 sartin."

"Did this old man ever steal anything else?"

"Yes; he has robbed hen-roosts and smoke-houses," re-
 plied the donkey, firmly.

"Oh, my gosh! Don't do it, honey!" he cried, ap-
 pealing to Dovey.

Tommy was doing splendidly, and throwing his
 voice into the donkey in the most natural way imagin-
 able.

No wonder the old negro was alarmed, for Dovey
 was at first startled himself at the strangeness of it.

"Well, pop, you know whether you ever stole any
 chickens or hens, so be careful how you answer, for
 there is a miracle here," said Tommy, solemnly.

The old dark was silent.

"Shall I ask the donkey again?" said Dovey.

"No, no, chile, don't do it!"

"Then will you confess?"

Again he was silent.

"Steals every time he gets a chance!" said the jack.

"Oh, Lord!" groaned the old fellow.

"Is this a warning for him to confess and repent?"

"Yes!"

"I—I—wal, chile," he began to tremble. "I—I—"

"Out with it, pop," said Dovey.

"Wal, yas! I guess how dat I did nip one or two
 biddiess."

"One or two!" the donkey exclaimed.

"Own up, old man!"

"Yas—I—yas, I stole putty consid'able ob dem yer
 chickens, I 'spect."

"And hams?"

"Yas, putty consid'able hams. Oh, lord!" he groaned,
 acting very shaky.

"Well, how about this donkey?"

"He stole me!"

"Yas, dat am so," he moaned.

Tommy had hit nearer than he expected.

"Well, will you restore it at once?"

"Oh, Lord, yas."

"And leave off stealing the remainder of your
 life?"

"Oh, Lord yas."

"Are you going to the city?"

"Yas, chile, gwine down dar ter get a few little things
 for the old woman."

"Well, see that you don't attempt to sell this don-
 key, for he will be sure to speak right out and give
 you away."

"Oh, goah, no! I didn't perzackly steal him, chile;
 I borrowed him."

"But you will return him?"

"Oh, goah, yas. But 'sposin' he gibs de ole man
 away when we get back home?"

"I guess he won't, if you reform and never steal
 again. You won't give the old man away, will you?"
 he asked, addressing the donkey.

"No, if he reforms."

"Oh, Lord! I'll nebber do so any mo'—neber!"

"That settles it. Good-bye."

The old man was too greatly agitated to speak as his
 tormentors rode away from him.

They turned in their saddles and watched him as
 they rode slowly along, and saw him approach the sup-
 posed speaking-donkey cautiously.

"Whoa, honey. Don't be mad wid de ole man," he
 pleaded; "he's gwine to be good now. Don't neber
 say a word 'bout dis yer to any ob de neighbors—will
 you, honey? Good Jacky," and with trembling hand
 he gently stroked his shaggy coat.

Then, after caressing him for awhile, he added:

"Be good to de old man, Jacky, an' I'll ride you jist
 as easy as eber I can," and, throwing one leg cautiously
 over the animal, he started him slowly along, and at
 the same time letting up on him by walking and taking
 nearly the whole of his weight upon his own feet.

It was a comical picture, and they laughed heartily
 as they watched him out of sight, and then continued
 their journey. Whether the old fellow ever reformed
 or not they never knew, but it is safe to say that he
 did, for he looked upon it as nothing short of a miracle.

After riding for an hour or two, and having some fun
 with several country people, they at length rode back
 into the city, well pleased with the sport they had en-
 joyed during the afternoon.

"Let us get a glass of lager, for I am thirsty," said
 Dovey, as they left the stable.

"And I think that I would like to rinse out my
 throat with something. I believe that I could build a
 small turnpike with the dust that has lodged there,
 since we have been out."

"Here is a saloon right over here," said he, leading
 the way.

Entering it and taking a seat at one of the tables
 they called for lager, and were waited on by a big, fat,
 lazy-looking Dutchman.

They were the only customers in the place, and they
 proceeded to put themselves outside of three or four
 glasses of the foaming beverage, while resting and talk-
 ing over affairs.

"Dot vas von nice day to-day," said the proprie-
 tor.

"Very fine," replied Tommy.

"Now, chintlemens, I dreat you vid myself, ha?"

"All right," said Dovey, and he turned to draw three
 mugs of beer.

"He has got a good cheek anyway," said Tommy.

"How the deuce does he know whether we wish to
 drink with him or not?"

"Well, never mind; we may get some fun out of
 him."

The Dutchman brought the beer, and placing it upon
 the table proceeded to take a seat on the opposite side,
 and to propose a toast to drink.

He was evidently glad to have somebody in his
 saloon, for trade had been very dull all day, and now
 that he had a couple of customers, he was bound to
 make the most he could out of them.

After drinking two or three times, a fat, slouchy dog
 walked into the room and stretched himself up on the
 floor for a fresh nap.

Tommy had been casting about for something to
 have some fun with, and when the dog came in he
 concluded to see what could be done with him.

"What breed of dog is that?" he asked, with much
 interest.

"Dot was ter tyfle's preed I guess. He is a lazy
 preed ad all evends," replied the Dutchman.

"But that is a very valuable dog, sir."

"Goot for some sausage, I dinks," said he, laugh-
 ing.

"What will you take for him?"

"Oh, vell, I dunno," he replied, for he tumbled to
 the affair right away as he thought, for if the cur was
 worth anything he was going to get it if he could.

"Will you take one hundred dollars?" he asked,
 after pretending to examine him.

The Dutchman opened his eyes, and his pot belly
 swelled with wonder, but he made no reply.

"Will you take one hundred and fifty dollars?"

"Val, I chusd doud guess dot I care about selling.
 Chack right away. Keep him a liddle und see vot he
 makes ouet mit himself."

"Well, I am sorry," mused Tommy, and the
 Dutchman was silent, hoping to make a big bargain.

"Oh, I'm so hungry!" said the dog, as he lay there
 half asleep.

Tommy and Dovey sprang to their feet and the
 Dutchman tumbled over backwards, and after knock-
 ing around among the chairs for a while he also re-
 gained his feet.

"Mine jiminy. Vad vas dot?"

"Why, he's a talking dog. I knew it the moment I
 set eyes on him," replied Tommy.

"Mine cot in hymil? A talkin' tog!"

"Yes, the rarest and most valuable breed of dogs in
 the world. Why, if that dog was mine, I would get
 five thousand dollars for him."

"Mine jiminy!"

"Wipe off your chin!" said the dog, looking up and
 winking at his master.

"Oh, mine cot! Vat vas dot?"

"Oh, he is gradually getting into it. He will be able
 to talk as well as you do in a few months."

"Oh, mine jiminy crickets! Dot vas der greadied dot
 I effer knew. Here, Katrina!" he called, and his wife
 came waddling in from the other room.

A few moments of earnest conversation in German
 placed his wondering frow in possession of the par-
 ticulars.

"Mine gracious! fas is dos?" she asked, looking in-
 quiringly at the lazy beast of a dog.

"Pull up your stockings!" said the dog, Jack, and
 Katrina ran backwards, catching her heel and sitting
 down in a big spittoon.

"Katrina, dose vas a fortune in dot dog."

"Then you won't take one hundred and fifty dollars
 for him, will you?" asked Dovey.

"No, py chingoes. I dakes me not a dousand tollar
 for him, I bade you. Come here, Chack."

"Oh, go shoal yourself!" replied Jack, and they all
 laughed heartily—all except Katrina; she had hurt
 herself and was sadly attending to it.

"Vant some meat, Chack?" said the owner.

"I'd like to eat your nose!"

"Mine cot! Katrina, do you hear dose dings?" he
 asked, as he flew around. "Com, elet us have some
 beer and cigars; come. Katrina, go und call Mr. Ding-
 lebecker in."

She went limping out to obey his orders, while he
 drew beer and set out the cigars, all the while in the
 greatest state of ecstasy.

Dinglebecker was a shoemaker next door, and he
 came in, blank with wonder at what the good woman
 had told him.

"Another bloody fool!" said the dog, and again every-
 body laughed except Dinglebecker.

"Dot ish ter piggest ding in Shant Louis," said the
 shoemaker. "But I would not let him run in ter
 streed mit bad poys, for he has learn too much."

"Come hais some more beer! Everypody have
 beer und cigars! Katrina, call in everypody!" and
 away she flew for the tap of his beer keg.

One after another came in to see the wonderful dog,
 and drink beer at the expense of the owner, and Tom-
 my made him speak several times to the great aston-
 ishment and delight of the constantly increasing
 crowd, but at the first favorable opportunity they
 popped out and left for their hotel.

The dog of course talked no more after that, and the
 Dutchman concluded he was tired, and so put him
 away with jealous care. After the crowd had gone
 that night he tried him again, but no talk. The next
 morning he attempted to make him do it, and the dog
 got mad and bit his thumb.

After fooling for about a week, and giving away sev-
 eral kegs of lager and boxes of cigars, he finally tum-
 bled to the joke that had been played upon him, and
 kicked the dog into the street and ordered to give him
 away, without takers.

"Mine cot in hymil!" he growled. "If I find me
 dot liddle cuss vat joke dot play, I chust pust my snoot
 ter pieces mit him, you bade!"

But he never found them, for the next day after
 they played the trick upon him they took the cars
 and started for New York.

"Hello, Tommy," they yelled again, all the while trying to get hold of his hands.

Then the hackman and others took it up and such a "Hello, Tommy" as echoed through that old depot was never heard before.

"Hello, Tommy Bounce," said Smith, one of his uncle's salesmen, and just then somebody, hit his hat and knocked it over his eyes.

Tommy dropped to the racket right away and tried to get clear, but they were too many for him, and such a shaking and bouncing around as he got during the next five minutes he never received before.

"Hello, Tommy!" was being yelled all around the depot, and the passengers crowded to see what it was all about.

In the meantime they tore his coat, stepped on his hat, got away with his coat and bag, and in other ways gave it to him rough.

But all the while Frank Hoyt was making believe that he was trying to keep them away from him.

"Right this way, Tommy; we have got a carriage for you," said he.

"Yes, begob, a foine wan, too," said Dennis, who took good care not to let go of his hand.

And amid the yells of "Hello, Tommy!" they rushed him out of the depot and into the old hack that Frank had hired.

"All right, drive on, old man; see you at the store in the morning," said Frank, banging the door to.

"Here, give me my hat and bag," cried Tommy, as mad as a hornet.

"All right, here they are," and three or four of the others threw his badly-used things in at the window.

"Good-bye; see you to-morrow."

"Oh, yes, you'll see me," said he, as the carriage drove away towards the ferry.

A loud shout and some more "Hello, Tommy!" saluted him.

He had never been used so before in his life, and it confused him so much that he scarcely knew where he was until he landed on the New York side and the driver started with his old spavined team up town.

"Well, this is a fine reception to give a fellow on his return," he muttered, "they have torn my clothes all off me. Why, a lot of Indians couldn't have acted worse. This was to pay up some old scores, I suppose. But I'll bet they will get it all back again. Oh, what a racket they gave me! Well, well, my turn comes next," he added.

He felt that he was a sight to behold, and so he did not look out much in search of familiar spots as he rode along.

"Confound this coach; it is too slow for a funeral," he muttered, after having ridden nearly an hour. "I wonder where we are, anyhow? I say, driver, can't you hurry up a little faster?" he called, looking out of the window.

"I'm doin' my best, sur," was the reply.

"Ain't afraid of heating the boxes, are you?"

"I'll soon set ye down a right."

"Do you know where to take me?"

"Faith, I do. Yer friends towld me."

"My friends," he growled, as he put his head back into the coach. "I wonder if this isn't a part of the racket, this old slow coach? I guess it is. Well, all right," and he settled back into the cushions again.

He was so busy with his thoughts that he did not notice that the driver had now entered into the park, and before he knew it, the carriage stopped and the driver opened the door.

"Here you are, sur."

"Where am I?" he asked, getting out.

"You are here."

"But where the devil is it, anyhow?"

"Central Park, where yer friends bid me lave ye," replied the driver with a grin.

"Oh, they told you to bring me here, did they?"

"They did, sir," he said, setting the bag out on the ground.

"A very good joke, very good indeed. Well, you have obeyed them, now obey me. Take me to No.—"

"All right," said the driver, leaping upon his seat and starting his horses.

"Here, hold on!" yelled Tommy.

"Go lang!" said the driver.

"Hello! hold on! you haven't got me."

"Begob, I know it. Go lang!" yelled the laughing driver, as he disappeared around a corner of the road.

"Well, I'll be hanged," mused Tommy, "if this isn't the jolliest old racket I ever knew. They have worked it nicely, and here I am in the middle of Central Park. Well, well, I guess they have got even with me now. But there is one consolation—they ain't here to see how well their game worked."

At that moment a hack drove past, and as it did so he heard a loud laugh come from those within. He hardly thought they were laughing at him, but just then they yelled: "Hello, Tommy!" and then he knew they had him.

"All right," he muttered, as the hack went out of sight. "You have had it all. I weaken. But you will have to hear from me yet."

Frank and three of the others had hired a hack and followed for the purpose of seeing the fun, and right heartily did they enjoy it.

It was now nearly dark, and Tommy suddenly remembered that his uncle and his family were probably waiting for him.

So he took up his duster and put it on over his torn coat and started back towards home.

It was a bitter pill to swallow, but he was doing his best to get it down without making much of a face over it.

Just as he was about to emerge from the park, the hack containing his friends drove past again, and once more he was saluted with a loud laugh and a "Hello, Tommy!"

"Oh, yes, I'm all right, I'll see you again, boys, never

fear," he called, shaking his fist at the fast-disappearing coach.

Exactly who were in the carriage he could not tell, for it was too dark to see; but he suspected, and made up his mind who his tormentors were.

On reaching the outside of the park on Fifty-ninth Street, he engaged a coach to take him home, at the same time telling him to stop at the first clothing store he came to, for he knew that he was far from being presentable as he now looked.

In the course of half an hour he was looking more like himself again, and as the hack drove up before his uncle's brown-stone mansion, the old gentleman and his whole family ran down the front stoop to welcome him.

"God bless you, Tommy my boy; welcome back," said his uncle, cordially shaking his hand. "Here, driver, give me these things; here, here is your money; now begone!" he added, giving the driver a five dollar bill. "Come right in, Tommy, my boy, come in. We are all dying to see you," he rattled, as he trudged up the steps with his nephew's things.

"Oh, Tommy, welcome back," said his beautiful blonde cousins, each taking him in turn and giving him a kiss.

"That's right, that's right. Pull him right in here and go for him," said his uncle.

"This was a reception worth having, for nobody enjoyed a thing of this kind any better than Tommy did.

They all went for him, and such a kissing and hand-shaking as he got was a caution.

Even the servants acted as though they would liked to have kissed him.

They hardly gave him a chance to wash up and get ready for dinner, so closely did they crowd around him, inquiring how he had been and what he had seen.

But at length they all sat down to the table, and a more pleasant family reunion was never had.

"Tell us all about it, Tommy," said his little favorite golden-haired cousin.

"Yes, do," put in the others.

"Why, girls, are you crazy? He'll choke himself if he attempts to tell you all about it while he is eating," said his uncle. "Now give him a rest. How did you like the West, Tommy?" he asked almost in the same breath.

"Oh, very much," replied Tommy, whereat the girls began to laugh merrily.

"What the dickens are you laughing at?" asked the old man.

"Why, you were just cautioning us against bothering him with questions while he was eating, and in the same breath you ask him how he likes the West," and they all kept up their jolly laughing.

"Oh, nonsense! Don't you suppose he knows the difference between being bothered by a lot of curious girls and having now and then a solid question asked him by a man?"

"We apologize, father," said Eveline.

"Of course you do. Now, Tommy, my boy, have another slice of the meat; and what do you think of California?"

"The girls exchanged mischievous glances with their cousin.

"Oh, it is the finest country under the sun."

"I dare say; everybody says so."

"And, by the way, I saw one of your old schoolmates out there; in fact, we made his house our home while we remained in San Francisco."

"Indeed? Who was it?"

"Mr. Marshall."

"What, Tom Marshall? One of the best fellows that ever lived; well, well. How is he getting along? First-rate, I hope."

"Oh, he is wealthy. Lives in splendid style a little ways out of the city."

"Good! good, by gracious; I am glad to hear it," said the old man, with much earnestness.

"Got any family?"

"Two lovely daughters."

"Good again."

Tommy thought so too.

"By the way, I have a letter from him to you here in my pocket-book," said he, taking it out.

"You don't say so! Well, that's good. Let me see it."

"Here it is."

"A letter from my old friend Tom Marshall! Oh, what sport he and I used to have when we were at school. We were two mad wags I do believe. Yes, yes, this is indeed his handwriting. Listen, girls, and hear a letter from your father's old school-fellow," he said, preparing to read.

"Are you sure there is no privacy in it?" asked Mrs. Bounce, smiling.

"Pooh, pooh! Privacy! Why, we haven't seen each other in twenty-five years."

He read as follows:

SAN FRANCISCO, August, 18th, 1876.

"MY DEAR OLD FRIEND EBENEZER:—(Didn't I tell you we were great friends?) It seems an age since we parted. Both of us have drifted apart and into different channels, but I trust we haven't forgotten each other yet. Your nephew, who is stopping with me, is making me grow younger every day, for he is just another such mischievous devil as you were at his age."

"Oh, oh!" exclaimed the girls, while Tommy blushed like a gobbler's comb and began to think he had given himself away badly.

His uncle didn't read with quite so much confidence as before, for he didn't know how badly he might be giving away himself.

"Do you remember the pranks we used to cut when at school? Well, Eben, this nephew of ours is just a piece of the same. He has played the mischief with everybody about the place since he has been here, and I haven't laughed so much in twenty-five years as he

has made me laugh since his arrival here. I wish you had been here."

Mr. Bounce looked up at his blushing nephew a moment, and then continued to read:

"Well, old friend, how are you getting on in the world? Tommy says you are the jolliest old rooster in New York. Ha, ha, ha, how is that, Eben?"

"Why, Tommy!" said his aunt, half reprovingly, while the girls laughed in spite of themselves.

As for poor Tommy, he hadn't a word to say. He was getting the bitter with the sweet so far since his arrival.

"Of course he doesn't know, but I suppose you are just as fond of the ladies as ever."

"Oh, oh!" come from all hands.

"Oh, he's only in fun," said Ebenezer, "I guess I won't finish it until after supper."

"Nonsense, let us hear all about it," said his wife, with just a bit of ifony in her face.

"Oh, well, I'm not afraid to," he said, as he again proceeded to read:

"What has become of the beautiful Cuban lady you were so very sweet on once?"

"Oh, indeed!" exclaimed Mrs. Bounce.

"Oh, papa!" chimed in the girls.

"Hush your tongue. Oh, I won't read any more of his nonsense now," said the old man.

"Oh, I'd go through with it if I were you," said his wife. "It is exceedingly interesting."

The old man continued, but not joyously.

"Tommy says you have got four of the handsomest daughters in the land. I am glad of it; I have two beauties."

The girls were blushing in company with Tommy now, and he wished he was out of there.

"Why not come out here with your wife?"

"Of course, my dear, we will go out there."

"Or you can come alone, I'll guarantee you will not get lonesome."

"I'd like to see you go out there alone," said his wife.

"Oh, confound Tom Marshall. He's always talking his nonsense," said the old man, folding up the letter and putting it into his pocket.

The meal was finished under a cloud, for Tommy felt that he had put his foot into it, and the old man wished that he had remained away rather than be the means of giving him away so badly.

But during the evening things got into a jolly groove again, and Tommy entertained them until midnight with the account of his adventures, after which he retired to his chamber to think.

And some right smart thinking did he do, for there were about a dozen of his fellow-clerks to get even with, and he could not get to sleep until he had laid out his plans for their benefit.

How well he succeeded we shall learn in our next chapter.

CHAPTER XL.

As Tommy lay in bed thinking of how he should get square with the clerks who had given him such a tearful racket on his return to New York, his mind ran over all the old tricks that he had played in his line, and with which the readers of THE BOYS' LIBRARY are familiar, he found himself almost at a loss for something new, and while studying over it, being quite tired, he fell asleep.

It was eight o'clock the next morning before he came down stairs, although there was a good excuse for him being late.

The family was waiting, and the moment he came breakfast was ordered up.

"Well, Tommy, my boy how do you feel this morning?" asked his uncle.

"As fine as silk, thank you," he replied; "but I was pretty tired when I retired."

"Oh, of course. It's hard work to ride in the cars. I know it."

Tommy hadn't given it away about the way his friends had put him through, and which had done more to tire him than all the riding he had done in the cars. Oh, no, he didn't tell that, but he remembered it.

They all chatted away until after they had nearly finished breakfast, when Mr. Bounce said:

"Now, Tommy, I suppose you have seen and enjoyed enough to last you some time?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you have come back ready for business?"

"All ready, sir."

"Ready to take my place and allow me to enjoy the fortune I have made while you go to work in the same way and make one for yourself?"

"Yes, sir."

"All right. We will go down to the store together, for I want you to enter it differently from what you ever did before."

"Differently! In what way?"

"I wish you to go in there this morning as my successor, and, remember, no more nonsense and practical jokes from this time forth; it will not do. They will not mix successfully with business. You have been a boy, and a gay one. You have had fun enough to last you for your lifetime, and now I want you, as my successor, to let it drop, and pay a strict attention to business, for however good and well established a business may be, it wants constant attention."

Tommy bowed to the good advice, and at the same time remembered several rackets that he had caught his preaching uncle in only a few years ago. He looked sober, said nothing, but winked to himself.

"Remember, my nephew, from this day you are one of the leading hardware merchants in the city, and you are starting where it took me twenty years to get."

"I appreciate it, sir, and will do my best to keep up the reputation of the house."

"I believe you will, Tommy, I believe you will, for you have got it in you."

Tommy instantly thought of his breakfast.

"Oh, I am sure he will do well," said the girls, who were greatly interested in him.

"And I heard you tell me once that he was just like you," said Evelina, laughing.

"Well, good for him if he is," replied her father; "but come, let us get away, I will explain matters further as we ride down."

The old gentleman got up and went into the library and his aunt went up stairs, leaving Tommy alone with his pretty cousins.

They no sooner found themselves so than the girls surrounded him, and what with hugging, kissing and congratulating him, Tommy concluded that he was getting about as good a send off as ever a young fellow got.

The coach was standing at the door, and for the first time Tommy rode down town in it, during which his uncle explained matters to him still more fully.

"Gentlemen," said the old merchant, after they were all in, "you, of course, know this young man here," and he pointed to Tommy.

They bowed, but the old man didn't appear to look very angry, and some of them took hope.

"Well, gentlemen, I have the pleasure of introducing him to you as your future employer," said he.

They all started as though an electric shock had suddenly pricked them.

Tommy bowed and smiled, but there was a little new-fashioned deviltry in his smile which made them feel sick.

"Are you going to retire, Mr. Bounce?" asked Smith, one of his oldest salesmen.

"Yes, I have been contemplating it for a long time. I shall go to Europe next week and leave the business entirely in Tommy's hands; and I trust that you will all serve him as faithfully as you have served me."

"Certainly, sir, of course we will do so, although regretting that we must part with you," said Smith,

here, an' of my ould woman an' nine childer. Sure, an' I don't moind it so much for myself, but it will affect me ould woman so much that she'll welt the devil out of me."

This sorrowful speech on the part of the porter, who had taken such an active part in the "reception," set them all laughing, and in a few moments they had concluded that Tommy would take no further notice of the affair, and settle right down to business.

This was what they wanted to believe, and so they ate their dinner and went back to work again, feeling a trifle better.

At one o'clock Mr. Bounce took Tommy out and introduced him to the saloon where he had taken his lunches so long, telling the proprietor that as his nephew had succeeded him in business, he hoped he would also succeed him in the good dinners also.

They saw but little or nothing of Tommy during the next few days, for he was busy in getting the reins of government into his hands, and was employed entirely with his uncle in the private office.



"After to-day your services are no longer required," said Tommy.

On arriving at the store Tommy found the clerks all dressed in a broad grin, evidently having been laughing and having a good time talking over the racket of the night before, and had he not been accompanied by their employer they would probably have given him a loud laugh the moment he came in.

But this hilarity did not escape him, although he took no notice of them and followed his uncle into his private office.

Frank Hoyt looked into the store and indulged in a few comical smiles and winks on the sly, but being nearer to Mr. Bounce and his nephew than the others, he had to be more cautious.

But Tommy saw it all, and wished he had no business on hand so that he could get even with him.

His uncle showed him an exact statement of the business, and for an hour or two he was giving him instructions regarding his future conduct, during which the clerks and employees about the place were doing their regular work, but indulging in much laughing over Tommy.

At noon before any of them went to their dinner, Mr. Bounce told Dennis to call all the clerks and salesmen into his private office, and they at once began to look sad and to ask each other what it meant. Had Tommy squealed and told his uncle all about the racket? Was it possible that he, who was the prince of jokists, had "kicked" because he got one played on him.

They all concluded that such must be the case, and Frank Hoyt at once made up his mind to carry out the same line of action that he had followed over at the depot, that is, to make believe that they were only demonstrating their affection for him, and that he in reality was endeavoring to keep the others quiet.

But with serious faces they all filed into their employer's office and waited.

about the only one who could get command of his tongue.

"Oh, you will find him just as good an employer as I have been, and I have no doubt but that you will get along well together in the new relation."

They glanced at each other and at Tommy, who sat by a desk writing, and felt that they would give considerable to be sure of it.

"That is all, gentlemen," said the old man, bowing and waiving them away, after which he turned again to his nephew and continued giving him instructions.

The employees gathered in little groups about the store or at the saloon where they went for their dinner, and began to canvass the situation.

There wasn't a mother's son of them but would have given five hundred dollars not to be caught in the racket they gave to Tommy, their new employer.

Dennis was especially sick.

His heart was up in his mouth so far that he could almost bite the end of it.

He had been in the employ of Mr. Bounce for fifteen years, and now he felt himself under a cloud.

"Be my soul, but I think the devil has a mortgage on all of us, so I do," said he, after thinking awhile.

"I'm afraid you are right, Dennis," said Mr. Burt, one of the rackets.

"But who the devil ever expected that he was going to succeed the old man?" asked another.

"Oh, I always knew that was the programme, but I had no idea that it was going to take place so soon," said Frank Hoyt.

"And a nice mush we have made of it," said George Waldron, another clerk.

"Yes, begorra, for we have all got our futs in it," suggested Dennis. "Oh, worra! worra! it's fired out we'll all be, as sure as guns. Faith, I saw it in the young man's eye; an' only to think how long I've been

Frank Hoyt had been sitting on pins ever since Mr. Bounce had announced the change that was to take place, and so he took the first opportunity to make himself solid.

"I congratulate you, Tommy," said he, the next day, having been called into the private office to explain some matter.

"Sir!" said Tommy, looking up in surprise.

"I congratulate you, Tommy, on your good fortune," he said again.

"Mr. Hoyt," replied Tommy, severely, "I trust you will have the kindness not to forget that from this time forward there is no such person as 'Tommy' in this establishment. Hereafter, when you have occasion to address me, you will not forget that I am Mr. Bounce, Mr. Thomas Bounce, sir."

This nearly laid Frank out cold, for he was not expecting it so soon.

"Oh, ah, I beg your pardon, sir."

"All right, only don't let it occur again," said he, at the same time waiving him back to his desk in the outer office.

"A trifle severe, Tommy, but that is right. Never allow them in the remotest way to be familiar with you. I have always maintained that line of conduct toward them myself."

"Well, speaking sharply to one will have the effect of speaking firmly to them all, for he will be sure to tell the rest."

"You are right, my boy."

Just then Dennis came along to Tommy's desk, to kind of feel around and find out what his probable fate was.

"Sure, Tommy, I am delighted at the prospect of having yees for a boss."

"You are delighted, eh?"

"Beggorra, but I am."

"Well, we shall see about that. But you will please address your new boss as you have always addressed your old one, Mr. Bounce."

"Sure, I'll be aither rememberin' it all the toime only when I forget it wid a slip of my tongue, Mr. Bounce."

"All right, we shall see. What did you come for?"

"Faith, ter congratulate yees."

"Oh, that's all right, Dennis, only the conversation is over," and he motioned him away.

Dennis went out with mixed feelings. What a change had come over the young man since he had met him last. He could hardly believe it.

"Faith it's money that makes the mare go, an' sure, it makes dacintry go sometimes, too. Begorra, I feel that me ould woman will have the best of this racket an' I'll git a head put on me the size of that barrel yonder. I wonder will I iver learn ter moind my own business?" and the poor fellow went about his work with a forlorn heart and a solemn mug.

"To be sure I will, sur. I've opened it an' shut it every day these fifteen years."

"All right. Here is your money," said he, handing him his envelope containing the note and his weeks salary. "Now tell the others to come in."

"Faith, sur, it's foine alacrity they'll show in doin that same."

"We snall see. Go."

Dennis went out to the door and beckoned them in at the same time whispering and winking to them as they passed him:

"It's all right, boys, all right. Divil a word he sail to me about goin', or about the 'kid' we give him at all, at all. Go in an' get yer money; an' 'e gob, we'll all go to the corner beyanst an' drink good luck ter our new boss in a schooner of beer. Hurry up!"

Dennis was feeling like a fighting cock. But how quickly some people change.

The others had filed into the private office, where each had received his envelope, which good breeding,

They all withdrew to the outside of the store, where they consulted further. Some of the younger ones were inclined to take it lightly and to laugh over it; but as the most of them were men with families depending upon them, it made them feel rather blue.

"We hadn't ought to have done it," said Robinson. "But who the dence ever thought he was going to the front like this? If the old man hadn't been so confounded fast for getting away, we might have made things all right with Tommy in a week or so," suggested Frank Hoyt.

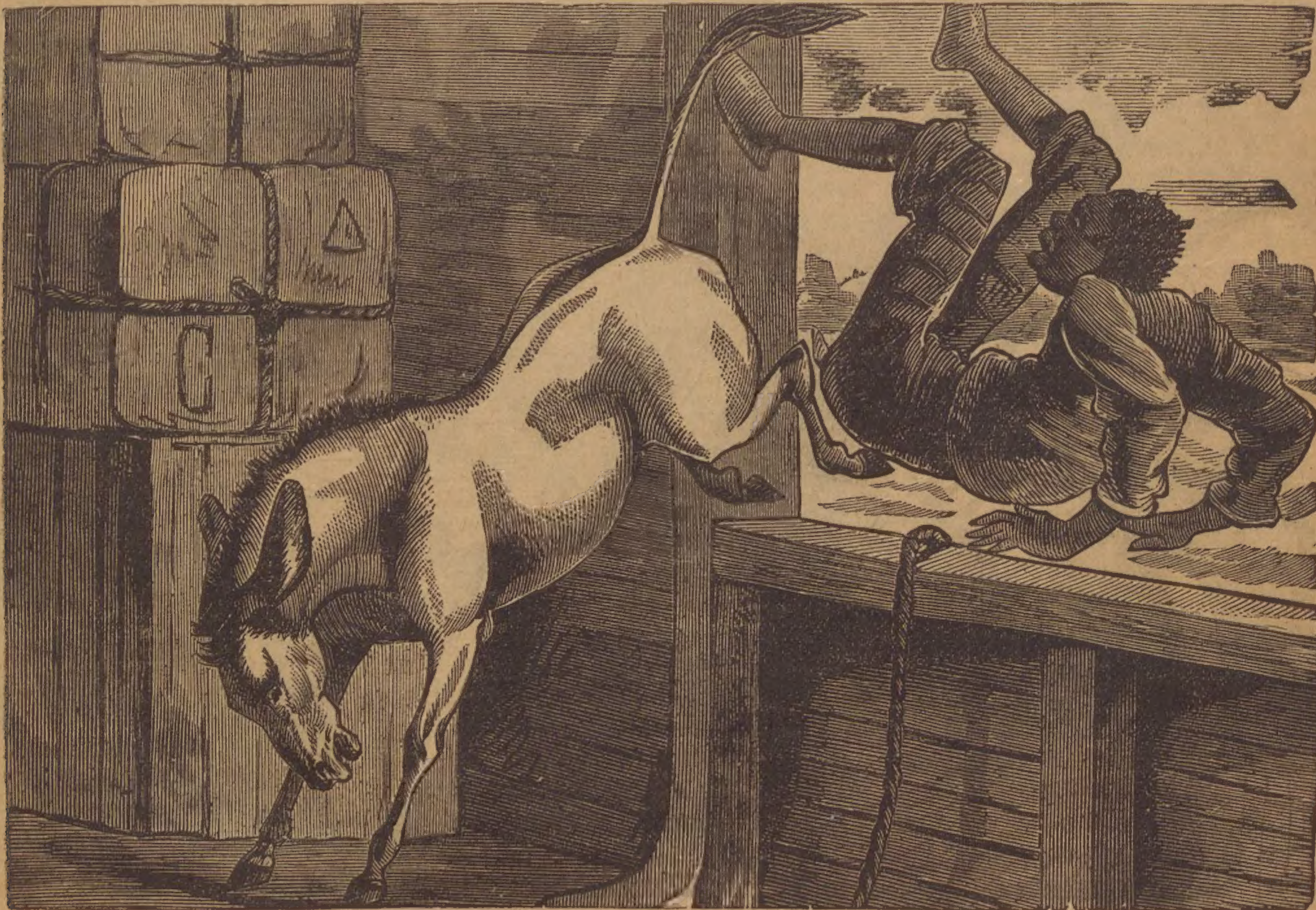
"Well, there's no use in crying over spilled milk," said another.

"No; but when a person kicks over his own milk, then he feels like clubbing himself."

"Well, we can't but say that Tommy Bounce has got savagely even with us."

"Even! Thunder; we only played a joke on him."

"Well, perhaps he calls this a joke."



The next moment there was a heaving of hoofs, and that indignant darkey was kicked over the rail into the river.

To tell the truth, a change had suddenly come over our hero.

While he was a boy and a clerk he could give way and have some fun in business, but now he felt himself a man, and knew that jokes and the carrying on of business could not make success.

So he shut down on all nonsense, and made up his mind to get right down to business and make a fortune as quickly as his uncle had done.

But it was against his principles to owe anything, and that debt of the "reception" was yet unpaid. Whenever he got a chance he was thinking about how he could bring it about and make it the last.

On the following Saturday his uncle and aunt, and two oldest daughters, sailed for Europe, leaving the two youngest at home, as they had not yet finished their education.

A housekeeper was installed, and so Tommy not only became boss of his uncle's business, but he was at the same time master of his house, horses, etc., which he and the girls concluded they could find use for without racking their brain to any great extent.

Saturday evening came and Tommy concluded to pay up that debt. In order to do this in the most effectual manner, he placed the week's wages of every one in his employ in an envelope, together with this note.

"SIR—AFTER TO DAY YOUR SERVICES ARE NO LONGER REQUIRED."

"THOMAS BOUNCE."

At five o'clock he called Dennis.

"Business all over for the day?"

"It is, sur, Mister Bounce," said he, bound to be just as respectful as he could.

"Very well. You will open the store as usual on Monday."

of course, would forbid them to open at least until they were outside.

But Dennis had gone out to the front of the store, where, a trifle out of sight, he had opened his envelope to get at the money for the purpose of drinking to Tommy's health.

His eye glanced over the note, and his head began to swim around.

The others came smiling along on their way towards home, but seeing Dennis in such a changed condition, they naturally stopped.

"What is it, Dennis?" asked Smith.

Dennis handed him the note without saying a word; in fact, he felt too sick for words.

Smith read it loud enough for the others to hear.

"Good gracious! Dennis discharged? What is it for, old man?"

"Oh, worra, worra! Fat for? For the foine reception I helped give him," moaned poor Dennis.

"What!" they all exclaimed, as they went for their envelopes.

First one jaw and another fell, and if there had been a doctor around just then he would have found "sickness" enough to have started him in business.

Frank Hoyt looked especially sick.

"Have we all got it?" asked Smith.

"All" they moaned in concert.

"Grand bounce!"

"Yes, fired out!"

"Clipped!"

"Thunder!" growled one.

"By the everlasting pickaxes, but this is rough!"

"Och! it's aisy toimes for any of ye; but me wid me nine childer and me ould woman! Faith, she'll make it sultry around the house for me! Och! an' why the devil hadn't somebody busted me over the thick head wid an ax-handle fast?" moaned poor Dennis.

"A joke!" they all moaned, as they started slowly up the street in a body.

"Let us go and get some beer," one of them suggested.

"No, no," they all said, for they felt too sick for beer or anything else. Times being hard, they all wondered where they should find another situation.

Slowly and sadly they took their different ways homeward, each cursing himself for attempting to play a joke on Tommy Bounce; but all at the same time thinking that it was rough punishment for what had only been intended a little pleasantry.

A bluer Saturday night and Sunday none of them ever passed before.

But it wasn't exactly blue for Dennis; it was red-hot. His "ould woman" was a tigress, although it was undoubtedly her strong arm and savage disposition that saved Dennis from being a drunkard. He wanted to but dare not drink.

And she kept a sharp eye on his doings generally, and when he went home that night with his woe-begone face and sad story, she would not hear to his version of it at all.

She insisted that he had neglected his business and gone out after beer and for that reason had been discharged, and the way she did waltz him around their little tenement was quite enough to keep his blood stirring.

In fact, none of the clerks could say they were entirely happy with their families and in their homes.

Tommy knew all that was going on.

He knew how severely he had got even with them, and he knew that in doing so he had occasioned considerable pain. But he had an antidote all ready.

During Sunday he made a copy of the following letter, which he employed a messenger to deliver to each one of them early Monday morning:

"DEAR SIR,—You will please resume your duties with five per cent. increase of salary.

"Yours truly,

THOMAS BOUNCE."

When these letters were delivered they made a sensation, you bet, especially the one delivered to Dennis. It was about six o'clock when the messenger arrived, but his "ould woman" had worried him out of bed and was just on the point of sending him away without his breakfast in search of work.

He tore open the note with trembling hands, and after reading it he danced a jig and cut up strange capers about the room.

"Begob, but this is the best joke that iver Tommy Bounce played in his life. Whoop! Quick wid me breakfast, Biddy, an' lave me down ter the store loike a Tipperary race horse."

They all gathered there early, and such a laughing, happy set of men were never seen before. They all

gave in that Tommy Bounce had make a joke out of the whole thing, and although he had got the best of it so far as punishment was concerned, the method he took of placing them on their feet again with an increase of salary, confirmed them in what they had always believed, namely, that Tommy Bounce was one of the best fellows that ever lived.

True, they could not call him "Tommy" any more, but they could think of him by his boyhood name, and that was some satisfaction, especially to Dennis.

About nine o'clock Tommy (we will call him so to the last) came down to the store and found everything working regularly.

He saluted them all with a smile, although it was plain to be seen the rollicking boy had given place to the earnest business man.

At noon he again summoned them into his private room, and then they began asking themselves if there wasn't another joke in store for them.

But they were soon enlightened.

"Gentlemen," said he, "on the score of the past we are even, but let this be the last. We have had a deal of pleasure together, and I have been one among

you but now I am done. Business is the work hereafter, and the first man I catch playing a practical joke, will have the privilege of playing them elsewhere. With this understanding let us renew our obligations to each other and go ahead like men."

They would have cheered him had he not motioned to them to be silent.

Dennis, however, found himself obliged to go up on the roof of the building, and there gave vent to his pent-up feelings.

Well, reader, here we are. We started with Tommy Bounce at five years of age. We have taken him through many amusing adventures, and we now take leave of him as a settled merchant.

The character is taken from life, and the original may be found within half a mile of our publication office.

But whether real or ideal, the author trusts that he has been a source of amusement to the boys of New York, and that for many years to come they will pleasantly remember "Pluck," and the adventures of TOMMY BOUNCE.

[THE END.]

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